

Indian Society

A Textbook on Sociology

K.L. SHARMA



शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्
National Council of Educational Research and Training

April 1987
Chaitra 1909

P.D. 5T—BB

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Publication Team

Foreword

Sociology has been recently introduced as an independent subject at the terminal stage of school education. Initially, the syllabus in sociology for senior secondary stage was developed by NCERT during 1975-76. Later, it was revised during 1984. The textbook in sociology for class XII is based on the revised syllabus.

Earlier two books 'Understanding Society' and 'Social Change' were brought out by NCERT. These books partially covered the syllabus for class XII in Sociology. The textual material for rest of the syllabus was brought out in mimeographed form by NCERT. The present textbook is the first complete textbook intended to cover the whole syllabus in sociology for class XII.

The book will help the students comprehend the Indian social reality in the perspective of development and change. It is designed to create a critical understanding of the structure and processes in the Indian society. An effort has been made to make the students aware of the diversities and the underlying unity in our society.

We are thankful to the author, Professor K.L. Sharma, Chairman, Centre for the Study of Social Systems, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, who took the challenge and put in hard work in the preparation of this textbook. Thanks are due to the eminent sociologists of the country who met in a review group from 30th December, 1985 to 2nd January, 1986 at the Department of Sociology, University of Jodhpur, for critically reviewing the manuscript and giving suggestions for improvements.

I am also thankful to my colleagues in the Department of Education in Social Sciences and Humanities and particularly Dr. Dinesh Sharma for planning the work and seeing it through the final stage.

Development of curriculum, textbooks and other instructional materials is an ongoing process. Suggestions and comments from the students and the teachers for further improvements in the textbook would be most welcome.

P.L. MALHOTRA

Director

New Delhi

5 August 1986

National Council of Educational Research and Training

Preface

Indian society is not simply a conglomeration of various ethnic, religious, linguistic, caste and regional collectivities. It is also quite complex in terms of differentiation in each one of the collectivities and their historical and social-cultural specificities. A discussion on patterns of unity and diversity focuses on continuity and change in Indian society. Indian society is a panorama, to a large extent a unique one, which absorbed diverse languages, cultures, religions and people of different social origins at different points of time in the past. These diversities are reflected in patterns of life, styles of living, land tenure systems, occupational pursuits, inheritance and succession rules and rites de passage. The British rule in India accentuated some of these socio-cultural and economic differences. The idea of unity is inherent today in India's constitution which pronounces values of secularism, socialism and democracy as its main ideals.

Hierarchy and inequality are deeply rooted in India's tradition, and are also found in practice in the form of inequally placed caste and class groups. These have resulted into persistence and equilibrium because of the organic linkages and inter-dependence of different socio-economic groups. However, Indian society witnessed change due to foreign invasions, migration, natural calamities, struggle for power, and policies of the Mughal and the British empires. Changes in the post-independent era have occurred mainly due to the Five Year Plans and developmental schemes in the fields of industry and agriculture. Expansion of higher education has been on an enormous scale. Some of the educated people have been benefited, but some have found it difficult to get suitable employment.

New forms of social and economic disparities have emerged in the post-independent India due to lack of "distributive justice". The developmental programmes have helped the traditionally better off more than those who were downtrodden and who genuinely needed social and economic betterment. However, the Scheduled Caste, the Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections of society have been benefited in the fields of education and employment. They are today socially more awakened than what they were before Independence. But the more needy and deserving have been much less benefited than the better off from their ranks.

Acknowledgements

I have satisfaction of writing a comprehensive textbook in sociology for students of Class XII. My feeling of satisfaction is not confined to the completion of this book. I will feel rewarded in real terms when students and teachers find my endeavour of some worth. I do not intend to take credit alone for this. Dr. Dinesh Sharma of NCERT deserves maximum gratitude for helping me in the finalisation of the manuscript with keen interest, ability and devotion. Professors B.S. Parakh and Anil Vidyalkar extended whatever help I needed from them. I am thankful to them.

I am extremely grateful to NCERT for organising the review group meeting at the manuscript stage, and to Professor S.K. Lal who facilitated its meeting of the Review Group from 30 December 1985 to 2 January 1986 at the Department of Sociology, University of Jodhpur, Jodhpur. The comments, constructive criticisms and the friendly advice offered by members of the Review Group helped me in revising the manuscript. I am grateful to the following who participated in the discussions:

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| 1. Professor S.M. Dubey
Dibrugarh | 9. Dr. B.K. Nagla, Rohtak |
| 2. Professor N.K. Singhi, Jaipur | 10. Dr. Umed Raj Nahu
Jodhpur |
| 3. Professor Sita Ram Akinchan
Ranchi | 11. Dr. Kirli Khamu, Jodhpur |
| 4. Professor S.L. Srivastava
Raipur | 12. Dr. S.P. Gupta, Jodhpur |
| 5. Professor S.K. Lal, Jodhpur | 13. Dr. Kailash Vyas, Jodhpur |
| 6. Dr. S.D. Badgayan, Delhi | 14. Sri R.K. Gupta, Delhi |
| 7. Dr. S.L. Doshi, Udaipur | 15. Dr. Dinesh Sharma, NCERT
New Delhi, |
| 8. Dr. K. Gopal, Meerut | |

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Indian Society : Unity and Diversity

Introduction

India is a plural society both in letter and spirit. It is rightly characterized by its unity and diversity. A grand synthesis of cultures, religions, and languages of the people belonging to different castes and communities has upheld its unity and cohesiveness despite foreign invasions, and the Mughal and the British rule. National unity and integrity have been maintained even though sharp economic and social inequalities have obstructed the emergence of egalitarian social relations. It is this synthesis which has made India a unique mosaic of cultures. India fought against the British Raj as one unified entity. India is, in fact, a panorama of its own type, without a parallel in other continents. Foreign invasions, immigration from other parts of the world, and the existence of diverse languages, cultures and religions have made India's culture tolerant, on the one hand, and a unique continuing and living culture, with its specificity and historicity, on the other.

Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism and Christianity are the major religions. There are fifteen national languages, besides several hundred dialects. There is diversity not only in regard to racial compositions, religious and linguistic distinctions but also in patterns of living, life styles, land tenure systems, occupational pursuits, inheritance and succession law, and practices and rites related to birth, marriage, death, etc.

Post-Independence India is a nation united against several odds and obstacles. The idea of unity of India is inherent in all its historical and

socio-cultural facts as well as in its cultural heritage. India is a secular state. It has one constitution providing guarantees for people belonging to diverse regions, religions, cultures and languages. It covers people belonging to all socio-economic strata. The Five Year Plans and several other developmental schemes are geared to the upliftment of the poor and weaker sections of society.

Topography and Environment

The name "India" is derived from "Sindhu" (Indus), the great river in the North-West. In traditional and legendary Hindu literature, India is called Bharatakhanda; and sometimes, it is called Jambudvipa, one of the seven concentric legendary islands comprising the earth. India is a vast sub-continent which extends for 3,200 km from south to north and 3,000 km from east to west. The entire area covers 32,80,483 sq. km. In spite of its diverse geographical features India looks like a single natural geographical entity. Geographical unity of India is reinforced by religious centres spread all over the sub-continent. The Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and people of other faiths with their respective places of worship are spread all over the country and they live together and greet each other on each other's festivals. They participate together in political activities. The political unity of India has been maintained by a uniform administrative set up and law of the land.

N.K. Bose, a renowned social-anthropologist, listed the following geographic which

have had a direct or indirect bearing upon the history and civilization of India. These are: (1) the comparative isolation or protection afforded by the northern mountain ranges, (2) the character of the two coasts of the peninsula, (3) the tropical heat and rainfall, (4) the character of the soil, and (5) the presence of extensive alluvial plains in the north, and of a plateau in the south.

The Himalayas and the Gangetic Plains

The Himalayas separate India from Sinkiang in the extreme south of China and from Tibet. The Himalayas are known as the abode of gods and sages. Mount-Kailas and Mansarovar lake are considered the holiest of the pilgrimages for Hindus. The Ganga and the Sindhu originate from the Himalayas and the Brahmaputra from the Tibetan plateau. The Himalayas have contributed to a large extent in the development of an Indo-Aryan civilization. The outer ranges of the Siwaliks, the first step upward from the plains, are significant for their geological wealth. Shimla and Darjeeling are two popular hill-stations connecting the plains with the Himalayan mountains.

geographical and cultural parts of the sub-continent. At least five important battles were fought in this part of India. Delhi is in the south of this tract. "In the basin of the Ganga have ever been founded the chief kingdoms of the plains, the most ancient cities, the earliest centres of Indo-Aryan civilization, industry and wealth. The mighty river has flowed through the ages in an unceasing process of regeneration of the soil, spreading life and strength among the millions who venerate her as Mother Ganga and purify themselves in its sanctifying waters at the *tirthas* of Haradvara (Hardwar), Prayaga and Varanasi." (The Gazetteer of India, Vol. I). The land in this basin is extraordinarily fertile with immense agricultural wealth. The Ganga, Brahmaputra and their tributaries have ensured fertility and wealth from the plains in the north up to the plains of West Bengal. The Yamuna, Chambal, Narmada and Son stretch across some parts of the central plains. The Mahanadi irrigates the fertile flats of Orissa. The Kaveri, Krishna, Godavari and Periyar flow through the southern states. All these rivers have contributed to agricultural prosperity.

Malabar and the Coromandel coasts. There are a few good, natural harbours along both coasts. Cochin, Goa and Bombay are on the western side, offering safe anchorage for ships. Peninsular India developed and maintained a fairly brisk maritime trade with the rest of the world. Even the eastern lands, beyond the Bay of Bengal, were colonised by the rulers of the Peninsula. Rulers such as the Satavahanas, Pallavas and Cholas maintained a strong navy.

Rocks, ranging from the Satmala-Ajanta ranges to the Nilgiris, are a special feature of this part of India. This is, in fact, a plateau bounded by the Western and the Eastern Ghats. The state of Karnataka lies between the Eastern Ghats and the Coromandel coast. Tea and coffee are produced in the Kerala-Karnataka region. The area has numerous elephants. The hill tribes—the Kadar, Mudugar and Pulayan are found in this area.

The north of Goa is inhabited by the Marathas (near Poona). Cotton is the main product of this fertile region. Bombay to Agra and Bombay to Poona are the two main road and rail links known as the Thalghat and the Bhorghat, respectively.

Important towns and cities have come up on the banks of rivers, on sea coasts and trade and pilgrim routes. This is true about the cities of Patna, Calcutta, Benaras, Hardwar, Bombay, Madras, Surat, Broach, Allahabad, Pondicherry, Goa and many others. Trade and political factors contributed to the growth of the cities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, particularly due to the entry of East India Company in the 16th century.

Despite the variety of topographical and climatic features, India has promoted uniformity of culture. Peninsular India fostered cultural variety and variations among the communities who inhabited the area. The north, however, did not remain a closed and rigid social formation due to many external influences from the north-west.

SOCIO-CULTURAL UNITY AND DIVERSITY

Historicity of Unity in Diversity

The Indian cultural tradition is unique. The notions of *dharma* (normative order), *karma* (personal moral commitment) and *jati* (caste) as the hierarchical principle of social stratification are basic to Indian culture. A certain level of configuration of these elements and consensus has resulted in persistence and equilibrium in Indian society, and hence no major breakdown has taken place in its culture. It is said that the change is *in* the cultural system and not *of* the system. In other words, basic cultural and social values and norms still continue with some modifications. The values of *dharma*, *karma* and *jati* continue to guide social and cultural activities to a large extent. Hence change is *in* the system and not *of* the system.

The uniqueness of the Indian culture does not simply refer to its esoteric nature. It requires a thorough study of India's culture in terms of its history. Absorption and assimilation are trends of social and cultural change. Aryans and Dravidians lived together. Hindus and Muslims lived in close proximity, socially and culturally. Later on, Christians joined them. Today Hindus, Jains, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and people of other faiths participate together in the government, industry, commerce and other sectors of public life. Thus, there has been a continuous unity even in the greatest diversity. The diversity is reflected in thousands of caste groups each having its rituals, rites, rules and customs. It can be seen in terms of linguistic, religious and other ethnic variations. The styles of life differ from region to region and even between different castes and religious groups within the same village. The emperor Ashoka worked for the unity of India by achieving cultural and religious harmony and administrative efficiency.

Akbar, one of the most powerful Mughal emperors, projected the concept of a state religion called *Din-i-Illahi*, a synthesis of Hinduism and . . . The ma . . . of Muslims in

villages transformed their social life beyond recognition. They mingled with Hindus freely in almost all walks of life, with the exception of matrimony. The Hindu rajas and Muslim kings recognised literary and artistic abilities in individuals from both the communities. Kabir and Nanak were greatly influenced by the teachings of Islam. Conversion to Islam, and later on to Christianity, and today to Buddhism has resulted in a "mixed" culture. The Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi worked throughout his life to achieve national unity and integrity through communal harmony, upliftment of the poor and downtrodden and propagation of a just social order.

The Colonial India has two histories. One, of colonialism produced by the colonisers, and the other of India's culture and civilization perpetrated through its intellectual and philosophical fervour. India's history, its architectural treasures, its literature, philosophy, music, drama, dance, and its other fine arts, all contributed to India's social life, and could not be destroyed by British rule. It is this history which remained neglected during British Raj.

Mahatma Gandhi desired radical changes. However, he wished to associate such changes with India's tradition and cultural heritage. Jawaharlal Nehru, the architect of Modern India, with a modern and secular outlook, upheld India's past with reverence and a sense of pride. He writes: "Yet the past is ever with us and all that we are and that we have comes from the past. We are its products and we live immersed in it. Not to understand it and feel it as something living within us is not to understand the present. To combine it with the present and extend it to the future, to break from it where it cannot be so united, to make all this the pulsating and vibrating material for thought and action—that is life."

bridge the gap between them and the upper castes and classes. Today, no caste or social group suffers any kind of social disability. Women enjoy equal rights with men, in all respects. The policy of "divide and rule", adopted by the British to rule this country, is no more in operation. Colonial exploitation has been replaced by processes of development and egalitarian ideology.

Factors of Disunity

Despite a rich cultural heritage, egalitarian policies and programmes, and the 'rule of law', narrow loyalties, parochial ties and primordial interests have increased in the post-independence India. We find today divisive forces operative in many parts of India. India is a land of sharp contrasts—very rich, upper caste and class people on the one hand, and extremely poor, lower caste and class people are found on the other. There are people belonging to different castes, religions, regions and linguistic groups spread all over the country.

There are minority groups based on a variety of considerations such as religion, language, region, custom and traditions. Even the so-called majority group, the Hindus, are divided into several sects, castes, clans and linguistic groups. These groups have certain aspirations for their members in regard to better education, employment and a certain standard of living. All members belonging to different castes and communities do not have equal chance or access, and hence they are denied "distributive justice". Such a situation of unequal opportunities in life, which itself is rooted into socially structured inequalities, aggravates tensions, mutual distrust and frustrations.

The consciousness of unity and a feeling of Indianness is seriously hampered due to such situations. Today India is faced with this problem due to a lack of synchronisation between the form and contents of its social structure. There is an urgent need to reduce the hiatus between the ideal and the actual. National integration can be achieved by bridging up this

gap, which is, in fact, between the strong and the weak, the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated and between the upper caste and class and the lower caste and class people.

ETHNICITY

Defining Ethnicity

Literally speaking, the word "ethnos" means nation, and the word 'ethnicity' is developed from it. However, "ethnicity" is not defined as nationhood. It is defined as a collectivity of people of a distinct nature in terms of race, descent, and culture. Thus, an ethnic group is a social collectivity having certain shared historicity and certain common attributes, such as race, tribe, language, religion, dress, diet, etc. A combination of them in a group makes it an ethnic group, which is perceived as such by its members and by members of other groups. One may call this self-perception ethnic consciousness for status and for recognition as a distinct social entity. Ethnicity is not a static or pre-ordained category; it is a manifestation of the common economic, political, social and cultural interests and their protection by certain members in a plural society. Thus, ethnicity, at times, is used as an instrument of mobilisation for realising social, economic and political goals.

Ethnicity is a cultural phenomenon, and as such no culture is "superior" or "inferior". Culture belongs to a people, and they endear it like any other people. E.B. Tylor defines culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". "Culture is the man-made part of the environment". Therefore, all ethnic entities are cultural groupings, and therefore, they enjoy the same position in terms of the normative orientations of different sets of people. The constitution of India declares that India is a secular state in which distinctions and discriminations based on caste, creed, region, language, religion, etc. are not allowed. The people have been given 'fundamental rights'

relations" Surjit Sinha refers to three components of sociology of religion: (1) beliefs in supernatural entities, (2) specialists who create such beliefs, and (3) laity who receive these beliefs in various forms.

Religion has played an important part in Indian society from the earliest times. It has assumed numerous forms and nomenclatures in relation to different groups of people associated with it. India has been a poly-religious society. Transformations and changes in different religions have occurred from time to time vis-a-vis changes in intellectual climate and social structure. Religion in India has never been static. Today it has made inroads into the arenas of politics and economic life.

Religious movements have been a perpetual feature of India's socio-cultural life. Pre-vedic and vedic religion, unorthodox religious currents led by the Buddha and Mahavira, and theistic religions, including the element of Bhakti, emerged from time to time. Religious sects like Vaishnavism, Saivism and Saktism emerged as the components of orthodox Brahmanism. In addition to these ramifications of religion several folk cults and religious practices were evolved by different people in various parts of India.

Religious Communities and Diversity in India

According to the 1931 census there were ten religious groups in India. These were Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Jews and other tribal and non-tribal religious groups. The census of 1961 listed only seven religious categories: Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and other religions and persuasions. Religion is really a complex phenomenon in India. For example, elements of Sanskritic and tribal religion are found in a mixed form at various levels. So is the interaction between the 'great' and the 'little' traditions. Integration of Sanskritic Hindu religion and tribal religion is also found. The Santhals, for example, observe several high caste festivals. This is also the case with the lower and "untouchable" castes. Some tribals worship

Shiva. M.N. Srinivas writes: "Different tribes are Sanskritized in different degrees, and different sections of the same tribe may not be uniformly Sanskritized".

Conversion to Christianity and Islam has been a controversial issue over the past couple of decades. It is said that the members of depressed classes and tribals have converted to Christianity, Islam and Sikhism in various parts of the country; particularly in the 1920s and also after Independence. A good number of tribals have accepted Hindu rituals and religious practices in Bihar, Bengal, Assam and other areas. Thousands of Harijans have converted to Buddhism in Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. Induced or forced conversion is certainly against the Constitution of India and the law of the land. There may be several factors responsible for change of religion; but it is certain that a number of people have changed religion to get free from religious orthodoxy.

It has been reported that minority religions show a greater percentage of literacy than the majority religions. Parsis, Jains, Jews and Christians have shown this pattern. With the exception of Christians, these communities are also more engaged in trade and business than Hindus and Muslims. A study reveals that the Parsis, Jews and Jains are "advanced" in business, though not diversified. Hindus and Muslims have a diversified occupational pattern because of their large numbers and spread all over the country. The minority groups are found in specific regions, sub-regions and cities, and therefore find themselves in an advantageous position. Syrian Christians, Moplas, Parsis and some other groups have been benefitted because of their strategic location in Kerala and Maharashtra.

Role of Religion in Social Integration

M.N. Srinivas examines the role of religion in social integration as a binding force amongst individuals and groups. However, it is more important to see how religion does this; how it functions. Karl Marx's dictum, "religion is the

found true if opiate of the masses", can be a tool of exploitation in the religion becomes a tool of exploitation in the hands of a selected few who claim to be, however, custodians and protectors. Sri Aurobindo considers religious behaviour as a part of social life. He refers to three points: (1) the relations between different castes and religions; (2) the general development of the village and other local level socio-economic role of religion in the economic development of the country; and (3) religion and privileges.

Multi-religious villages are not a phenomenon as multi-caste villages in India. However, in Uttar Pradesh, one can find Hindu tenants and Muslim landlords and vice versa. In Rampura village in Karnataka, Hindu landowners had Muslim tenants and servants; while Muslim landowners had Hindu servants. The Muslims were engaged in not only economic activities, as they dig orchards, but also in land. The Hindus owned land. Hindus and the Muslims carried on the trade and social occasions, including festivals and weddings. A particular religious community has special role in any economic field, its clientele belongs to various other religions.

In cities, Hindus and Muslims have been greeting each other on their festive occasions. In situations of riots and crises, they have come to each other's rescue. In the riot of November 1984 in Delhi and other places, protection by Sikhs were given shelter and lived in amity in the Punjab for centuries.

There is an association between religious communities and specific economic functions they perform. For example, Parsis are in the liquor trade. Moplah traders are found in Kerala, Mysore, Madras, Bombay, Gujarat. Gujarati traders are found in Bengal. Such an association is found even at the village level. From among the Hindus, Chettars and Telugu Komatis, Tamil Rajasthani Baniyas have played a particularly

important role in economic activities. However, several new caste groups have entered into commerce and trade. Caste barriers have weakened, and spatial mobility is greater. The spread of various communities all over the country and diversification of their economic activities have strengthened the process of social integration.

The sociologist Max Weber was the first to mention a Hindu ethic consisting of the principles of *samsara* (belief in the transmigration of souls) and *karma* (doctrine of compensation). These two principles together formed the basis of the caste system. Consequent upon this, according to Weber, caste system did not have a this-worldly rational ethic. Weber based his analysis on extrapolation of textual notions of Hinduism. Weber perhaps looked at the traditionalism and irrationality of Hinduism from the point of view of the protestant ethic and its relationship with the growth of capitalism in his own society.

Milton Singer has found religious ideological bases of the varna-jati order, sects and tribalism and their relationship with the processes of modernisation, nationalism, industrialisation and bureaucracy. However, it would be quite absurd to draw the conclusion that the Hindu ethic and caste system contribute to economic development in a positive way, and that there is, therefore, no need to change these systems. This view only explains the resilient character of Hinduism and the caste system vis-a-vis change in India's economy and polity.

large extent.

India has been characterised as a "primary" or "orthogenetic" civilisation, because it has its continuity; an uninterrupted history despite foreign invasions and wars between rulers within the country. The main source of strength of the Indian civilisation is the interaction between different parts of its tradition. The traditions which are written, find a place in Hindu or Islamic literature, religious texts and scripts. These are called "great traditions". The ones which are unwritten and transmitted orally from one generation to another are called 'little traditions'. These two are constantly interacting with each other. When the elements of a great tradition filter down to the people, the process of such a spread is known as *parochialization*. When the elements of a little tradition become a part of a great (sanskritic) tradition, the process is described as *universalisation*. To call a tradition great or little, in fact, amounts to designating people as great and little, because it is the people who are literate or unlettered. Traditions refer to norms of behaviour and inter-personal relations. They are symbiotic in nature; but their hierarchy refers to a hierarchy of human beings. To call illiterate folks little and the literate great, even by implication, would involve a value judgement. Thus, religion is a very complex phenomenon. It is necessary to simplify it by clarifying those canons which put all the believers on the same wave-length without any discrimination whatsoever based on caste, region, cultural heritage, economic position, educational status, etc.

Use of Religion in Fulfilling Narrow Ends

Though religion is an integrative mechanism, it has been used to fulfil narrow social and political ends. A number of associations and groups have been formed with religious names with a view to evoke religious consciousness for getting support or favour from members belonging to a particular religious group. The Hindu Mahasabha and Muslim League are glaring examples of this practice. Even educational

institutions have Hindu, Jain, Muslim, Christian and Sikh names. A number of castes have also mobilised their members in politics like the religious groups.

LANGUAGE

Defining Language

"A language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by which members of a social group cooperate and interact". (Gazetteer of India, Vol. I). Language as a system, consists of a series of symbols, the meanings of which must be learned by all those who use that language. Language is an aspect of culture "by means of which the learning process is effectuated and a given way of life achieves both continuity and change". (Gazetteer of India, Vol. I). The building up of knowledge is not possible without language.

Language is also a social phenomenon in terms of its differential association with different social strata. Some people have command over both written and oral aspects of a given language; while others, being simple folks, have access only to the oral aspect. Sanskritic language or any other language may become a resource for some people; whereas a lack of knowledge of the same may prove an obstacle in social and cultural mobility. A linguistic group or collectivity becomes, at times, a strong primordial entity, and may turn into a sort of ethnic or communal group in opposition to some such other group.

Role of Language in Social Integration

Language is a living force; it is not a static phenomenon. It has changed with changes in social formations, ruling clans and with demands of specific historical situations. Pali and Prakrit languages were prominent in ancient India. Sanskrit enjoyed the status of carrying Hindu sankritic culture throughout the country. These were followed by modern Indo-Aryan languages: Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kashmiri, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sindhi and Urdu. The lan

dian stock (with the exception of Marathi). These include Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada. Each of these languages, of both the stocks, have several dialects spoken by people living in different linguistic regions.

The rulers of medieval India brought new forms of religion, language, manners and customs compared to those of the orthogenetic culture and civilization. The institutional basis of social order and economic organisation remained unchanged to a large extent. The caste system and village economy continued to function undisturbed during the medieval period. However, Indian culture and political power underwent transformation; influencing language, culture and religion. A "Hindustani" way of life emerged in Northern India. The writings and accounts of foreign travellers from Islamic countries promoted Arabic and Persian languages. The Hindu culture, caste system and village economy remained undisturbed despite foreign rule. The Indo-Aryan languages rapidly developed into literary languages. With the emergence of these languages, cultural changes occurred; including diminishing upper caste domination, the decline of Sanskrit language, and waves of religious and social reform using popular idioms and the language of laity. "The confrontation of Hindu and Muslim cultures led to interesting results and a mixed culture", (Gazetteer of India, Vol. I) particularly in the North India.

Linguistic Structure of India

According to Grierson, India has 179 languages and 544 dialects. However, this estimate cannot be authentically accepted as authentic, since dialects were counted under the head of 'languages'. The Constitution of India, in its Eighth Schedule, recognises 15 languages. These are: Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. Hindi has been given the status of India's official language, along with English. The people speaking Rajasthani, Maithili, Manipuri

and Nepali want their languages to be incorporated in the Eighth Schedule. Santhali, Mundari and Ho are also spoken by a large number of people. In undivided India, over 73 per cent of the people spoke the Indo-Aryan languages, 20 per cent spoke the Dravidian languages, 1.3 per cent the Austroic languages and only 0.85 per cent spoke the Sino-Tibetan languages. There has been interaction between the three main families of languages.

Language as the Basis of States' Reorganisation

The present formation of India into 'states' represents the language map of India. The States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) carved out states based on linguistic uniformity and continuity. There is an anomaly, however, in the six Hindi-speaking states: Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and in Punjab. The spoken languages within these states have been clubbed under the broad head of Hindi. The rest of the states: Assam, Bengal, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala have a majority of people who speak Assamese, Bengali, Oriya, Telugu, Gujarati, Marathi, Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam, respectively.

language problem is the imposition of English by the British Raj in India. Lord Macaulay said: "We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect." He continued: "To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population." This policy of imparting education in English proved fruitful for the raj but not for the Indian masses. Universities and colleges were established for the express purpose of training individuals for subordinate ranks. Nationalist leaders viewed this policy as a device of the British to produce a "baboo (clerks) class" Nehru writes: "The British had created a new caste or class in India; the English-educated class, which lived in a world of its own, cut off from the mass of the population, and looked always, even when protesting, towards its rulers." The indigenous elite were thus transformed into a class of clerks by Macaulay's policy of English education in India in the first half of the last century.

However, there is also a counter-view that India joined the world community through its English education. The promotion of vernaculars would have been a threat to India's unity. The study of science and technology was made possible by the knowledge of English. We have already stated some limitations of the view which undermines the role of indigenous languages in "emotional integration" and "national consolidation". Rabindranath Tagore writes: "A language is not like an umbrella or an overcoat, that can be borrowed by unconscious or deliberate mistake; it is like the living skin itself".

India has always been a multi-lingual civilization with special elite languages and a constant interaction between local, regional and

all-India languages. Unity and assimilation at various interactional levels have been specific features of the Indian sub-continent. Amidst vast diversities, the doctrine of a single language, essential for national identity, cohesiveness and unity, has been challenged from time to time. Rajni Kothari suggests a pluralist solution for the vexing language problem.

About 90 per cent of the people claim 15 "national languages" as their mother tongues. However, official (national) languages are Hindi and English according to the Eighth Schedule of India's Constitution. The fact is that even national languages are regional in scope. Even today English is considered a necessary licence to get lucrative and prestigious jobs. English has thus created a hiatus between the elite and the masses. Regional and local leaders have, at times, demanded "linguistic autonomy" with a view to replace English by Hindi or some other "national" (regional) language. The carving out of states on the basis of language has certainly promoted regional linguistic autonomy. The "three-language formula" was devised to counter the demand for "Hindi only", and also to promote the use of a "national" (regional) language in a given state in place of Hindi and English. These three languages were Hindi, English and the regional language, such as Telugu or Tamil.

Advocating Hindi as the official language for the entire country has evoked sharp protests in non-Hindi speaking areas such as Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Bengal and Assam. On the other hand, the indigenous languages have received the attention required for their preservation and enrichment. One view is that the extended use of indigenous languages can bring about 'emotional integration' and national consolidation; as this would be a direct attack on the small upper class entrenched in administration, law-enforcement professions, business and industry (as these use English as the basic instrument of communication). If the English language is the medium of debate in Parliament or a State

Assembly, the elected members cannot be considered true representatives of their people. Thus, it is argued that indigenous languages should be used in administration and planning. Apparently, this seems to be a plausible way out; but it may block proper communication between people speaking different 'national languages'. Inter-language rivalries might also arise.

It is clear that the language situation in India is quite complicated and hazardous for national consolidation and development. A structure of linguistic states came into existence in India after a great deal of acrimony and bad feeling. Language riots in undivided Maharashtra and anti-Hindi riots in Tamil Nadu are still fresh in our memory. The first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, once suggested that the people in the North should learn one of the South Indian languages, and the people of the South should learn Hindi voluntarily.

Even in the heartland of Hindi (Northern India), after thirty-eight years of India's independence, the English-knowing candidates are preferred for white-collar jobs. Demotion of English language amounts to the promotion of indigenous languages. In the absence of an all-India language as a unifying force, the formation

linguistic states has taken the country towards narrow sectionalism, provincialism and parochialism, endangering national integration. Caste, region, and language tend to coincide in India to a great extent. Caste structure is broadly regional and goes along language boundaries. The absence of a single script for India has accentuated the linguistic turmoil from time to time.

Language is a very sensitive aspect of people's lives. When, in accordance with the Official Languages Act of 1963, Hindi was declared the official language of India, serious riots broke out on 26 January 1965 in Tamil Nadu and spread to other non-Hindi speaking states. Consequently, English was retained as an associate language for as long as the non-Hindi speaking people wanted it. The three-language formula was introduced at this juncture.

We may sum up by stating that language, like ethnicity and region, is a primordial basis of collectivity and, therefore, it plays the same kind of role in various sectors of social life including social ranking, economic development, education and politics. Language, being a cultural phenomenon, becomes a very sensitive issue on many occasions. Language disputes and riots have at times threatened national unity and solidarity. The three-language formula was introduced as a device to minimise such problems, and to strengthen the forces of national unity and integrity. Language, as a means of communication and accretion of knowledge, should not be allowed to become an instrument of power in a few hands. It should be accessible to all those who wish to learn that particular language.

Conclusion

India can rightly be characterised as a society having unity in diversity and diversity in unity, as it is a plural society both in letter and spirit. Despite innumerable odds, India has maintained its unity in ancient, medieval and modern India. We find unity in all its historical and cultural facts. India is today a secular state. It has one constitution and rule of law for all the people living in different regions, speaking different languages and believing in different religions and faiths. Today Hindus, Jains, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and people of other faiths participate together in administration, politics and public life. Ethnic, linguistic and religious diversities do not hinder the realisation of the common national goals. The cultural heritage of India has been a living example of the synthesis of different cultures. All the religions have promoted cultural synthesis.

Besides the Constitution of India, the Five Year Plans, the spread of egalitarian values, a central government and a common body of civil and criminal laws strengthen India's unity and plural character. Distinctions based on caste, race and creed are no longer the basis of

special powers and privileges. The weaker sections of society, including Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the other Backward Classes, have been granted special concessions and avenues for elevation of their depressed status and position. Women enjoy rights equal to men in all respects.

We have discussed in detail the phenomenon of ethnicity, religion and language. These are

socio-cultural aspects of our society as well as its living forces. At times they are used to promote narrow parochial ends posing a threat to national integration. Ethnic conflict, communalism and language disputes have occurred from time to time. Educational institutions, elections and political parties have particularly been used for spreading communal feelings by groups with vested interests.

EXERCISES

1. Describe the physical and topographical features which have had a direct or indirect bearing upon the history and civilization of India.
2. Explain India's unity : diversity and diversity in unity. Give suitable examples from the socio-cultural life of the people of India.
3. What forces and factors threaten the unity of India today?
4. Define ethnicity. How is it different from caste? Give examples of ethnic conflict.
5. What role does religion play in Indian society?
6. Explain the following:
 - i. Religious movements
 - ii. Religious conversion
 - iii. Hinduism and national integration
 - iv. Religious harmony and tolerance
 - v. Main doctrines of Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Christianity.
7. Discuss the following:
 - i. Great and little traditions
 - ii. Parochialisation and universalisation
8. Explain language as a socio-cultural force in national integration.
9. Discuss the linguistic basis for reorganisation of states in India.
10. What is the policy of government towards the promotion and use of Hindi, English and other national languages?
11. What are the main features of the present educational system in India? Explain the role of English language in contemporary India.

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The Indus Valley Civilisation

We shall make a brief reference here to the Indus valley civilisation. The Indus valley civilisation was urban and it covered more area than the civilisations in the Nile, the Tigris-Euphrates valley or in the Yellow River valley. From West to East, the Indus valley civilisation covered a distance of over 1,550 km, and from north to south it covered over 1,100 km. Systematic town-planning is the most striking feature of this civilisation. Streets, lanes, by-lanes and houses were in symmetry, and were built of kiln-burnt bricks. The Gazetteer of India, Vol. II notes: "A house comprised a central courtyard, three to four living rooms, a bath and a kitchen; while the more elaborate ones contained even upto thirty rooms and were often two-storeyed. Many of the houses were provided with a well; and there was an excellent underground drainage system". The cities possibly had 'lower' and 'upper' parts. A 'college', a multi-pillared 'assembly hall', a public bath, a large granary and a citadel built with burnt-bricks with a wooden superstructure have been found.

There were bumper crops of wheat and barley, besides peas, melons and bananas. Cotton was also grown. Fish, fowl, mutton, beef and pork were also used. Cattle, cats, dogs and even elephants were commonly found. The *dhori* and shawl were used as clothing. The womenfolk combed their hair with care and bedecked themselves with necklaces, bracelets, finger-rings, ear-rings, girdles, and anklets. The Indus people lived in the full-fledged bronze age, as is evident from their use of domestic objects like sows, sickles, chisels, fish-hooks, pins, mirrors, and weapons made of bronze. Copper and gold were also used; but not produced locally. The objects of worship reveal that the Indus people comprised Mediterraneans, Alpines, Proto-Australoids and Mongoloids. It was, in fact, a cosmopolitan civilisation.

The subsequent developments also testify to the existence of 'organised civic life'. This included the planning of an entire township; a regular drainage system, standardisation of

weights and measures and a system of writing. Arts and crafts began to develop. However, still people were in the 'primitive' era. By the time of the Atharva Veda, the Aryans were fully acquainted with metals and drew distinctions between iron, bronze and copper.

The changes in Indian society have been slower than in other civilisations. "Each phase of cultural development tended to overlap the next, thus leading to a modicum of continuity and permanence". Despite regional differentiations and constant contact with outsiders, the Indus civilisation was essentially Indian in character. There are references to this effect in Vedic literature, the Puranas and early Jaina and Buddhist texts.

A proper archaeological documentation is available about the Maurayan empire and various regional and local cultures. The use of iron is found all over India. The spread of Sanskrit also contributed to the fusion of cultures. Archaeological and linguistic materials testify to the evolution of pan-Indian culture. The sub-continent is 'Indian' in essence because of its geographic isolation. "The synthesis is the result of millennia of conflict and interaction of the various groups of people who migrated into this country". Linguistic integration was maximum as a result of contact with the foreigners. Racial and cultural synthesis is reflected in myths and legends narrated in the Puranas. "Aryanisation" became widespread, covering Bihar and parts of West Bengal. 'Indianisation' of foreign cultures also took place simultaneously. "Aryanisation" refers to the impact of Aryans (foreigners) on the indigenous people; and "Indianisation" refers to the process of adapting the styles of life of the native people by the Aryans. The two processes of change brought about accommodation and finally blending of the Aryan and the indigenous cultures.

The Vedic Civilisation

What is the relationship of the Indus valley culture with the Vedic civilisation of the Indo-

Aryans? R.C. Majumdar, H.C. Raychaudhuri and Kalkinkar Datta write in *An Advanced History of India* (1970) "On the face of it there are striking differences between the two. The Vedic-Aryans were largely rural, while the characteristic features of the Indus valley civilisation are the amenities of a developed city life. The former probably knew of iron and defensive armour, which are totally absent in the latter. The horse played an eminent part in the Vedic civilisation but its early existence is doubted in the Indus valley. There were also important differences in respect of religious beliefs and practices".

The Veda is the only literary source from where one learns about the Aryans in India. The Rig-Veda Samhita is the earliest book on the Aryans. Vedic society was rural and agricultural. Temples and schools emerged as the basic institutions of various socio-cultural and educational activities. The village was an autonomous unit. During the fourth century B.C., seven castes are reported by Megasthenes. However, inter-caste marriages were quite common. The vices of drinking, gambling and prostitution were regulated by state licence.

Women had access to all branches of learning in Vedic times. They even composed Vedic hymns. Gargi and Maitreyi were eminent philosophers during the age of the Upanisads. The women of higher castes participated in *yajna* (sacrifice) with their husbands. They had the right to own property and widows could remarry. A man could marry more than one woman, whereas a woman could marry only one man. However, in the Buddhist period, women lost their right to pursue Vedic studies. The situation changed considerably in the Gupta period. The *Swayamvara* (choice made by the bride for a groom after a test of valour) and *Gandharva* (free mutual choice) forms of marriage became unpopular, and *Arsa* and *Asura* marriages (with dowry) became popular. Woman had no right to own property and the widows were denied remarriage. The institutions of *Purdah* and *Sati* emerged.

The Post-Vedic Society and Culture

In the early centuries of the Christian era, foreign invaders mingled with Indian ruling families who (foreigners) came under their influence. The capitals of foreign dynasties became centres of a cultural synthesis which gave Indian civilisation a distinct cosmopolitan character. Puranic Hinduism rose during the Gupta age. The Buddha was accepted as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Brahmanism and Buddhism were reconciled with each other. Hinduism, aboriginal beliefs and practices and foreign religious symbols came closer. "Hindu society became a federation of cultural and social groups freely interchanging ideas and customs and living side by side in good neighbourly relations".

Fa-hien mentions that under the Gupta empire there was all round prosperity in Northern India in the fifth century A.D. The merchant class amassed immense wealth. Trading and banking activities were at their peak. The wealthy people spent benevolently to build and run schools, monasteries, temples, hospitals and alms-houses. The Buddhist monastery at Pataliputra was a famous centre of learning. The people believed in omens and astrology. Music, dancing and feasting were common on social occasions and on festivals. The spring festival (*Vasanta Utsava*) was celebrated with gaiety.

Dharma, and not law, was a real code of ethics for the harmonious functioning of the various divisions of society. "Dharma Sastra or Smritis laid down rules for every caste and vocation, for every relation in society—king and subjects, husband and wife, teacher and pupil. The rules were not rigid and were revised from time to time to meet new developments. Sometimes the law-givers and the priestly class introduced their own ideas and laid down strictures and taboos". (The Gazetteer of India, Vol. II). Hiuen Tsang, a Chinese traveller, who visited India in the seventh century A.D. wrote that the people were honest and were true to their word. They believed that the vice committed by a person

came the patriarch of the state and he appointed a battery of officers and councillors. The state started collecting land revenue and taxes. The varna system was projected as a functional way of fulfilling the needs of society.

The codes given by various *rishis* required rigid adherence to the varnas; placing restrictions on marriage and social relations between different groups. The Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Jataka stories show that the Brahmana not only enjoyed the highest grade in the varna system, but also amassed wealth and power. They were assigned revenues of villages or tax-free lands, called *Brahmadeva*, by royal charter. All Brahmana grantees were not engaged in study of the Veda. Several of them followed Vaishya's activities. The Brahmana organised themselves into guilds like other professions. They used to quarrel among themselves for their respective shares. Brahmanas were not secularised, as they received a lot of charity from kings and the laity. They became "corrupt", as Manu and Narad have reported.

The hereditary basis of varna did not apply strictly to the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas. Statecraft and military vocation were not confined to one group. There are numerous Brahmana, Vaishya and Shudra royal dynasties in the annals of India. The Satavahanas were Brahmanas, the Guptas were Vaishyas and the Nandas were Shudras. There were Yavana, Saka and Kusana who did not belong to any caste.

The Vaishyas were a highly differentiated caste group, as they consisted of a few wealthy families, small peasants, artisans, hawkers and petty officials. The Shudras had a perceptible class character. They served all the three varnas. Their economic standing was the lowest. They were practically 'servants' of the upper castes. However, the "exterior" castes were considered outside the varna system. As a result of this, further differentiation, intermixing of caste groups through marriages, and several sub-castes emerged.

Did caste and class overlap in ancient India?

Changes in a man's economic position did not affect his caste status. The two hierarchies, caste and class, did not coincide. The class hierarchy from top downwards, was (1) high officials, merchants, bankers and landlords; (2) small freeholders, artisans and ordinary officials; (3) labour without right and property; and (4) despised and segregated labour. The last two categories corresponded with the stated vocation of the Shudras and the *mlechha*. However, the first two do get with the stated vocations of the Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas. But there were also some who followed their state vocations faithfully could never become economically prosperous. Brahmanas and Kshatriyas enjoyed privilege; whereas the Vaishyas enjoyed wealth. The Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas commanded esteem and influence because of the high social and cultural value attached to their vocations. However, the caste system maintained its organic character and a balance of interests of the various sections of society. The caste system received a serious jolt with the rise of Buddhism.

The Varnasrama System

Hindu society's main stronghold was the system of *Varnasrama Dharma*. This refers to four different classes (varnas), which we have discussed briefly, and four stages in man's life (ashramas). The four stages were: *Brahamcharya*, *Grahashtta*, *Vanprashtha* and *Sanyas*. The *Brahamacharya* stage is one of learning and the formation of good moral character and personality. The *Grahashtta* specifies the obligations of a man to get married and look after his family as a religious duty. The *Vanprashtha* and *Sanyas* stages refer to the renunciation of the world, to devoting oneself to the pursuit of spiritual knowledge and to attaining salvation. The ashramas were principles of equality and unity. They were devised to attain a full and complete life.

Along with these closely interlinked schemes was the scheme of the *purusharthas*, the basic principles of life, which defined the duties of man

towards himself, his family and to the community. These are: Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. These principles could rightly be called value-themes or goals of life arranged in a hierarchical order. Of these, Dharma or moral duty is basic to all human activities.

Y. Singh has listed four hierarchies, namely, (1) role-institutionalisation (varna), (2) charismatic endowments (guna) (3) goal-orientations (purushartha), and (4) life-stages and its value-obligations (ashrama) as part of the Hindu concept of cultural order and its structure. Singh refers to both *order* and *change* as basic features of Indian tradition. Hierarchy, holism and continuity refer to 'order'. 'Change' is analysed in terms of 'transcendence' or transformation. Everything is hierarchised in the Hindu tradition.

Islamic Tradition and Culture

What is Islamic culture? Y. Singh writes: "In contradistinction to the structure of the *Hindu great tradition*, the great tradition of Islam is founded on a world-view which is apparently non-hierarchical, is purely monotheistic and messianic-historical in ethos." The world-view of Islam proselytises in the sphere of religion. It also makes Islam holistic and socio-centric. In principle, there are no priests in Islam. Islam is an insular and exclusive religion. It is based on the unity of the Muslim Umma, "the collectivity of the faithful". The Quran (the holy book) and various Islamic traditions have contributed to this holism and collectivism. Thus, theoretically speaking, Islam has the elements of equality and egalitarianism. In the beginning, Islam spread among tribal people. However, subsequently, it became complex. From nomadism it turned to an agrarian and mercantile economy. Islam expanded its base in several countries. It acquired a feudal-authoritarian character.

Muslims are the second largest community in India. Historically too, they are the oldest group with the exception of Hindus. Hindus and Muslims have been living together for almost a millennium. The two represent two different cultures, world views and ways of life. Islamic

and Hindu traditions have interacted, synthesised and also remained insulated. Y. Singh mentions three major stages of Islamic traditions in India. These are: (1) the duration of Islamic rule in India, (2) during the British domination, and (3) during the Indian freedom movement and upto India's independence and the country's partition. The first stage is marked by conflict, tension, adaptation and cultural syncretism between the Hindu and Islamic traditions. The Muslim rulers carried out religious warfare (*jihad*), with the help of the Ulemas. Despite the conflict, the two traditions had changed their tribal egalitarian character due to their contact with Persian society. By this time, the social structure of Islam had distinctions based on status and honour.

The Islamic society was divided into priest, nobility and all others. They also had hereditary succession in twelfth century A.D. The elite belonged to the uppermost segment of the indigenous people (non-convert foreigners). The Muslims (the *Ashrafs*) were of four grades: Sayyad, Sheikh, Mughal and Pathan. The Sayyads and Shaikhs belonged to the nobility of Muslims and occupied high religious offices. The Mughals and Pathans were warriors, feudal aristocrats and rulers. These groups later on evolved into a caste-like structure, and were guardians of the Islamic great tradition. The Sufi tradition had seventeen orders. Its emphasis on the ascetic ethic and on metaphysics impressed the Hindus.

Impact of Islam on Indian Society

Prior to the advent of Islam, and after the reign of Harsha, India witnessed a spell of political disintegration and intellectual stagnation. The country was divided into several small states. People developed parochial outlooks and identities. Formalism and authoritarianism dominated religious and cultural life. Shaivism and Vaishnavism emerged as two distinct religious sects. No innovative religious writings, ideas or commentaries were contributed by the intellectual elite. The Shakas, Hunas and Guptas

put an end to the golden age of the Gupta dynasty. However, these foreigners gradually adopted Hindu religion and culture. These invaders called themselves descendants of the Kshatriyas. This was the beginning of Rajput culture, art, literature, poetry and drama. Malwa, Kanauj, Bengal, Kashmir, Ajmer, Gwalior, Chittor, Ranthambor and Mandu were the places not only of Rajput chivalry but also of new culture, architecture and literature. South India remained stable during this period and, therefore, did not experience political disintegration like the north. The Cholas ruled the whole of peninsular India.

The historian Tarachand, in his book, *The Influence of Islam on Indian culture*, observes that social and cultural revivalism in the South was due to the impact of Islamic culture. Muslim Arabs had trade relations with South India for many centuries before the emergence of Islam in India. Indo-Iranian maritime trade had reached its peak. Some of these foreign traders had even settled in Sri Lanka and on the coast of Malabar. Some Arab Muslims also came to Sind and Gujarat; but their impact was limited. However, from the twelfth century A.D., one observes a definite impact of Islamic culture on Indian society.

H.V. Sreenivasa Murthy and S.U. Kamath have highlighted both negative and positive aspects of the impact of Islam on Indian society. They write: "Islam was indirectly responsible for making Hindu society caste-ridden and exclusive. The Hindu woman was veiled and sati was made more strict. Child marriage became more popular."

Synthesis of Hindu and Muslim Cultures

The Sufis started writing in Hindi. Hindi literature thus developed. Urdu also grew; as a hybrid of Hindi and Persian. Arabic words crept into this new language. Indian music was also much influenced by Islam. New schools, like *Khayal*, developed in Hindustani music due to the influence of Persian music. New instruments like the tabla and sitar evolved. In architecture,

the Indo-Sarcenic style appeared, with spacious interiors, massive domes, arches and minars. Sufism was highly influenced by the mysticism of the Hindus. The monotheistic ideas of Islam influenced Hindu society, particularly some of the leaders of the Bhakti movement, like Kabir. The rise of the Bhakti cult was a unique development of the Mughal period. Leaders of the movement were mystic saints. They emphasised oneness of God. Universality, love and equality were publicised as attributes of God. The Vaishnavites were the main followers of this cult. South India was the main seat of the Bhakti movement. The Nayanars (Saivas) and Alvars (Vaishnavas) of Tamil Nadu popularized the movement by singing devotional songs. The saints, Ramanuja and Madhwa, were its main architects. Ramanuja propagated *Visishtadvaita* (qualified monism), and Madhwa taught *Dvaita* (dualism). *Veerasaivism*, a zealous *Saiva* cult, was propagated by Basava, in the twelfth century A.D. Ramananda (a propagator of Rama Bhakti), Kabir, Janadeva and Raidas were other Bhakti saints who propagated oneness of God in north India. Meera, Vishnu and Rama Bhakti were their main concerns. Bhakti was no religion. Kabir Panth advocated universal brotherhood and love, amity between Hindus and Muslims. Chaitanya Prabhu, Tulsidas, Surdas, and Meera enriched the Bhakti movement and Hindi literature.

It has been mentioned earlier that Akbar strived at a synthesis of Hinduism, Jainism, Islam and Zoroastrianism by introducing *Din-e-ilahi*, a new faith. Amir Khusro, a literary figure, tried to incorporate Hinduism in the Muslim culture. Several poets wrote in Hindi. Many of them made appeals for cultural integration of the two religions. Along with such cultural synthesis, Islam continued on orthodox lines with the support of the administration and the Muslim clergy. Muslim *qazis* (Judges), *muftis* (preachers), *faujdars* (district administrators), and *darbaris* (courtiers) held positions with economic advantages and power, and contributed to the emulation of the Islamic culture.

Changes in the Islamic Tradition

The Muslims lost their prestige and power during the British period. Loss of political power and legitimacy was a severe jolt to the Muslim elite and the Islamic tradition. Poverty descended upon them and their educational pattern underwent a huge change. The syncretic and liberal tendencies of Islam were undermined and were being replaced by the orthodoxy and revivalism of the eighth century A.D. Y. Singh observes that the reformation movement in the nineteenth century A.D. had two polar views: (1) for liberalism and peaceful reform; and (2) for more orthodoxy and militancy. Perhaps the latter was responsible for the creation of Pakistan. Singh mentions two levels of relationships in the early twentieth century period of struggle for independence: (1) a relationship with the Islamic tradition between the secular-minded and the orthodox elite; and (2) the relationship between the Hindu elite, secular and non-secular, and the Muslim elite. The Muslims aspired for equal power and political parity in free India. Fearing that they would not get this, they agitated for the creation of a Muslim state—Pakistan. Besides gaining lost power and prestige by having a Muslim state, they also thought of revivalism of the Islamic tradition, culture and nationalism.

Y. Singh distinguishes between the little and Great traditions as follows: "the former is rural, mass-based, consisting of the unlettered and less formalised; whereas the latter is elite-based, urban, reflective and formalized". The little tradition of Islam consists mainly of the converts from Hinduism. It also includes descendants of those Muslims, who slid down to lower status. Islamisation has been a fact in at least three ways: (1) as an upward cultural and social mobility in the status of groups through conversion to Islam; (2) as a movement for restoring orthodoxy among the converts; and (3) in terms of adoption of some Islamic cultural values by non-Muslims.

Islamisation was a sort of Sanskritisation until the coming of the British. In the British period

and in post-Independence India it is more a revivalistic movement. However, conversion to a religion generally results in change in socio-cultural status, and sometimes in economic advantage and psychic gratification. Generally, the lower Hindu castes, with their degraded status converted to Islam; or in the recent decades to Christianity to achieve equality of status and economic gain. However, the converts have rarely been accepted either as equal to those whom they have theoretically joined or those whose ranks they have left. In regard to endogamy and hypergamy, they are still guided by rules of their original castes/communities.

Even today Muslims in India are a conservative lot. Economic inequalities are more pronounced among the Muslims. They are very sensitive about personal laws, the system of *purdah*, and family planning. Muslims are generally more "backward" than the Hindus in cultural matters as the latter have shown more adaptive capacities. Muslims also suffer from fear and suspicion of the Hindu majority. With the formation of Pakistan, some sections of Hindus, feel that the Muslims of India should blend into India's mainstream of national life. The Hindu community can certainly play a constructive role in generating confidence among the Muslims.

Society in the British Period

It is generally accepted that society in India was nearly stagnant at the time of the British intrusion. The British were advised not to interfere with the social customs and religious beliefs of the Hindus. L'Abbe Dubois observed that the day the British interfered "will be the last of its existence as a political power". The Mughal rulers were also not generally interested in conversion as a means of social change. However, some sort of a synthesis emerged during the medieval period (which we have discussed in the last section of this Chapter). Caste and class structures in rural India were rigid and stagnant at the beginning of the British rule. The individual was considered subordinate

to the caste, the family and the village Panchayat. Economy was archaic. People lacked national consciousness. At such a time, the advent of the British created a new situation.

British Impact on Indian Society

The British government, Christian missions, and English education were three main sources of British impact on Indian society. The British government replaced the indigenous systems of administration and governance. The missions made efforts to convert Indians to Christianity. British educationists tried to spread education to bring about a change in the outlook of the indigenous population. The British community in India also had an influence on the people in different parts of the country. The port towns and coastal areas were more affected; at least in the beginning of the Raj. The emergence of a national consciousness, the realisation of the value of organisation and of the importance of agitation led to the formation of the Indian national Congress in 1885. K.M. Panikkar notes that "the most notable achievement of British rule was the unification of India". This was done unconsciously by the British, in the interest of the Indian people. They were interested in spreading and consolidating their rule throughout the country. The same argument can be made about the introduction of Western education, means of transport, communication, technology and judiciary.

Y. Singh observes that "the contact of the Indian (Hindu) tradition with the West was of a different and radical sociological significance.... Historically, it was a contact between a pre-modern and a modernizing cultural system". The Western tradition had "the scientific and technological world-view based on rationalism, equality and freedom". Consequently, the Indian tradition, which already had a sort of "breakdown", became further open, liberal, equalitarian and humanistic. The Western (British) tradition posed a serious challenge to the Indian tradition. *Hierarchy*, the principle of social ranking based on birth in a particular

caste group; and *holism*, the "organic" interdependence between different caste groups, based on norms relating to performances of the assigned functions and duties by various groups, were considerably affected by the Western tradition.

Westernisation

M.N. Srinivas defines Westernisation in terms of the change in Indian society due to the impact of British rule in India. The areas of change include technology, dress, food, and changes in the habits and life-styles of people. Westernisation takes place at three levels: (1) primary, (2) secondary, and (3) tertiary. At the primary level a minority of people who first came into contact with Western culture, and were its first beneficiaries. The secondary level of westernisation refers to those sections of Indian society who came into direct contact with the primary beneficiaries. At the tertiary level are those who came to know indirectly about the devices introduced by the British. Thus, there are levels of the process of westernisation. Its spread has been uneven and unequal among different sections of Indian society. Though Srinivas has mentioned humanitarianism and egalitarianism as its positive features, there are others who consider westernisation as a process of cultural and cognitive colonialism and as a model of an "impersonal, non-cultural and non-sovereign state".

Westernisation has contributed to the reemergence of a pan-Indian culture on new grounds. Some areas of Western impact include education, law, science, technology, new forms of politicisation, urbanisation, industrialisation, the press, means of transport and communication. Y. Singh calls the reemergence of these institutional foci the process of "cultural modernisation". The Western impact has brought about "a new great tradition of modernisation". Certainly, this poses the problem of conflict between the indigenous tradition and the Western tradition on Indian soil. A synthesis between the two has occurred,

humanistic elements from the British tradition and used them for rousing national feelings and creating political consciousness. The ideas of communalism, secularism and nationalism, borrowed from the western philosophers, proved very useful.

India since Independence

India won freedom mainly through a sustained, non-violent struggle involving the sacrifice of thousands of people, mainly under the leadership of Tilak, Gandhi, Nehru and Bose.

India became a free country on 15 August 1947. India was partitioned, and the new nation, Pakistan, was created. India has adopted the democratic-socialist path for its development and progress. India adopted a new constitution which was implemented on 26 January 1950. The Constitution guarantees fundamental rights to the citizens of India, ensuring equality, freedom and justice. Besides the fundamental rights, the constitution also outlines directives for State policy with a view to give a socialistic direction to social and economic change in India.

Equality before Law

Today, there is "rule of law" in India. All citizens are equal and subject to the jurisdiction of the same authority. Even the privy purses, granted to the princes and feudal lords, were abolished in the late sixties. Birth is no more the basis of recognising status and power. Religion, language, caste or ethnicity are no longer considerations for providing social honour and privileges. However, the weaker sections of Indian society, particularly the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Classes, have been provided special facilities and provisions for their upliftment. They are protected against discrimination and exploitation by the dominant sections of Indian society. Women have equality with men. All the citizens of India have the right to vote at village, assembly, state and central levels.

Progress in Education

There has been tremendous progress in the field

of education. More than 100 million children receive education at the primary level. The increase in numbers at the secondary stage is also impressive. Education at college and university levels has also increased enormously. Today there are about 140 universities in India. Diversification of education at senior school, college and university levels has also been taken up by the government of India. Basic education is being provided at the elementary level. Today, at senior school and university levels, emphasis is being put on vocationalisation, computer studies, applied sciences, management and on some other relevant and gainful fields of knowledge to tackle the problem of unemployment among educated young men and women.

The government intends to implement a new educational policy by 1986-87. Special attention has been given to the education of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, women and backward sections. Education has promoted migration of people from villages to towns and cities and the process of urbanisation. There is increased emphasis on Hindi and other national languages than there was in the pre-Independence era. The policy of learning three languages at the school level has been implemented in all the states of the Union of India.

National Consolidation

States of India were reorganised in 1955 on the basis of the recommendations made by the States Reorganisation Commission. Since this was done on the basis of the language spoken by the people, each state has some cultural cohesiveness. India was characterised by a unique type of feudalism under which the *rajās*, *thikanedars*, *jagirdars* and *zamindars* were treated as *Mai-Bap* (parents). To begin with, the government abolished such patrimonial feudalism, and subsequently also abolished the privy purses and compensations granted to the *rajās*. This was really a "revolutionary" step, as the tenants were granted ownership rights. The institution of *zamindars* as intermediaries

Hindu and Muslim cultures in the fields of music, language, architecture and Bhakti movements, started a couple of centuries ago and is very evident even today. We discussed the interaction between Islamic and Hindu cultures, and the interaction of the two with other cultures in India. Islamisation as a process of change in other communities was discussed.

British rule in India, Christian missions and English education have brought about noticeable changes in Indian society. In a way the British tradition posed a serious challenge to the Indian (Hindu) tradition. The ethos of Indian culture and society underwent drastic change due to the impact of British rule. Land tenure systems, the new educational system, systems of judiciary and administration have all altered the structure of Indian society. Many scholars attribute some positive results to this impact, but

others differ. We have discussed the process of westernisation in the context of education, judiciary, urbanisation, industrialisation, means of transport and communication and national and social awakening.

Today, India is a free country. It has its constitution which guarantees rule of law to its citizens. Five Year Plans and other developmental schemes are implemented for making progress in the fields of education, industry, upliftment of weaker sections and women. However, it has not been possible, so far, to give "distributive justice" to all citizens of India. Casteism, factionalism, communalism and regionalism at times hamper the progress of the country. In some cases, the benefits have not reached the needy and the down-trodden. Social legislations have also remained somewhat ineffective.

EXERCISES •

1. Explain the following:
 - i. The concept of culture
 - ii. The literary sources in the ancient period
 - iii. Stages of man's progress
2. Write a note on the quality of life in the Indus Valley Civilisation.
3. Bring out the main points of distinction between the Vedic civilisation and the post-Vedic civilisation.
4. Write notes on the following:
 - i. The Vedas
 - ii. Status of women in the Vedic period
 - iii. Dharma
 - iv. Cultural synthesis
5. Define varna. Distinguish it from caste.
6. Explain the Varnashrama system in terms of division of society into varnas and four stages in man's life (ashramas).
7. What is Islamic culture and tradition?
8. Critically discuss the impact of Islam on Indian society.
9. What major challenges were faced by Indian society in face of the British rule in India?
10. Explain the process of westernisation in the context of the imbalances it created in Indian society.
11. What are the main social and cultural changes noticed in India since Independence?
12. Discuss the main reasons which obstructed implementation of policies and programmes for the upliftment of the weaker sections of Indian society.

Chapter III

Socio-Religious Reform Movements

Introduction

Socio-religious reforms in British India were needed for three reasons: (1) the selection of texts from various commentaries on the code of Manu had not always been enlightened; (2) the reliance on law courts for interpretation had resulted in greater conservatism; and (3) the law, as applied by the law courts and British judges, was a combination of ancient Hindu and Victorian English conservatism, particularly in regard to women, inheritance, marriage and the rights of married women. The right to property of individual members in a joint family or the granters of property rights to women took many years from their acceptance in letter to their actual acceptance. The joint family, caste and Hinduism have always been the pivotal institutions which discourage any legislations which would weaken them manifestly or even latently.

Besides these reasons, there were several socio-cultural and economic problems which demanded mass mobilisation, awakening and action against the British Raj, feudals and upper sections of society. There was a need to attack the institutional mechanisms which had made society rigid and exploitative.

A.R. Desai considers religious reforms movements an expression of national awakening due to contradictions between the old value systems and new socio-economic realities. The aim of these movements was to revive the old religion in the context of nationalism and democracy as the cardinal principles for the emergence of modern India. Desai writes: "Modern

society established in India by the British conquest was a capitalist society resting on the principles of individual liberty, freedom of competition, contract, and freedom of the individual to own and manipulate property at will. Individualism was its keynote in contrast to the pre-capitalist society which was authoritarian in character, maintained social distinctions based on birth and sex, and subordinated the individual to caste and the joint family system. The new society demanded, as the very condition of its development, the abolition of privileges based on birth or sex." The reform movements were against medievalism in socio-cultural realms. They attacked the caste system and its allied institutions, polytheism, superfluous religious rites and dogmas. "These religio-reform movements were national in content but religious in form." Besides the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission, the Servants of India Society, we will also briefly discuss several other movements, including the Theosophical Society, reform movements among Muslims and Sikhs, the Swadeshi movement, Satya Shodhak Samaj movement, Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana (S.N.D.P.) movement and tribal movements.

The Brahmo Samaj

Raja Ram Mohan Roy is considered the father of modern Indian Renaissance. He was born in an orthodox and well-to-do Brahman family in a village in the Burdwan district of West Bengal in

1772, and died in 1833. Besides English and Bengali, Ram Mohan Roy acquired knowledge of Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic. He also knew Hebrew, Latin and Greek. He made a deep study of Hindu and Muslim laws, literature and philosophy. He believed in the progressive reform of religion and in society with a liberal outlook. Ram Mohan Roy did not believe in worshipping the images of God. Monotheism was his main slogan.

On 20 August 1828, he founded the Brahmo Samaj, the literal meaning of which is "One God Society". The orthodox Hindus did not cherish the ideals of this institution, but generally people welcomed this new organisation. Ram Mohan Roy was a secularist as he was inspired by Christianity, Islam and the Upanishads. He had great faith in the uncompromising monotheism of Islam. He learnt about the concept of the unity of God as an essence of Hinduism from the study of the Upanishads, Brahma Sutras and Gita.

Ram Mohan Roy thought that, without sacrificing or discarding the genuine spiritual and cultural heritage of India, India could have a new philosophy, absorbing and assimilating the modernism imported from the west. He strongly advocated use of modern science and technology in education and also the use of the English language. Ram Mohan Roy was, in fact, a rationalist and a pioneer of English education and enlightened journalism. He championed the cause of the exploited peasantry. His main aim was to relate religion to all aspects of life—individual, social and national. Universal theism was his message. He, however, used the Vedas and the Upanishads, in worship, sermons and devotional music, with emphasis on the universality of their contents.

Ram Mohan Roy worked against irrational institutions like sati and child marriage. He was champion of the cause of women. Through the Brahmo Samaj, he advocated widow re-marriage, divorce, civil marriages, and education for women. Inheritance of property for women, and inter-caste marriages were special programmes undertaken by the Brahmo Samaj. He

was against the caste system, as it put barriers in the way of growth of Indian society. Ram Mohan Roy was essentially a democrat and humanist.

He did not hesitate in borrowing good from the British Raj and western culture. The Brahmo Samaj was an institution for all sorts of people, without distinction, for the worship of the one Great God, without idolatry. However, the historians—R.C. Majumdar, A.C. Raychaudhuri and Kalikinkar Datta are of the view that Ram Mohan Roy never regarded himself as anything but a Hindu. He stoutly denied that he had founded a different sect. He always entertained the recital of the Vedas even by orthodox Brahmanas. No non-Brahmana was allowed in the Brahma Sabha room. The Raja himself wore the sacred thread of the Brahmanas upto his death.

Debendranath Tagore (1817–1905) provided a solid organisational set-up to the Brahmo Samaj after the death of Ram Mohan Roy in England. He decided to make the propagation of "Brahmo Dharma" the main programme of the Brahmo Samaj. His *Tattvabodhini Sabha*, or Truth Teaching Society, preached the Vedas and Vedantism as the basis of the Samaj. The system of *initiation* and form of divine service were introduced by the new leader. He maintained and carried the best traditions of the days of Ram Mohan Roy. Upto 1866, Debendranath was the leader of the movement at Calcutta. He gave a new direction to Brahmanism by abandoning belief in the infallibility of scriptures. The Samaj continued to work for ameliorating the position of women and children and for modernisation of education.

In 1866 alone, 54 Samajas were organised in different parts of the country. Keshub's fervent devotion, passionate enthusiasm and powerful eloquence gave a new life to the Samaj. His rationalistic principles reached new heights. The true spirit of repentance and devotional fervour increased the strength of the movement. He toured Madras and Bombay and other places to propagate the ideals of the Samaj.

Debendranath and Keshub soon fell out, as the two cherished different ways of functioning within the Samaj. Debendranath was for a slow and cautious move; Keshub advocated a radical approach. In 1866, Keshub established the Brahmo Samaj of India. The parent body was known as the Adi Brahmo Samaj. The new organisation tried to foster the sense of spiritual and national unity in India. Keshub's visit to England in 1869 spread the message of the Samaj in the West.

The splinter Samaj advocated radical changes including complete abolition of the caste system. Female emancipation and female education received top priority. Due to Christian influence, greater emphasis was put on the sense of sin, the spirit of repentance, and the efficiency of prayer. Religion was treated as a practical recourse to solve human problems, rather than a dogmatic doctrine. His thesis of 'New Dispensation' (Nava Vidhan) declared on 25 January 1880 promoted a new synthesis of different religions.

The fourth phase in the Brahmo Samaj emerged when some followers of Keshub Chandra Sen left him and founded the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj on 15 May 1878. The new organisation was formed for the following reasons: (1) the demand for the introduction of a new constitution was not accepted; (2) there was disagreement on the question of *adesha* or Divine Command; and (3) Keshub Chandra Sen's daughter was married to the prince of Cooch Bihar, in violation of the Native Marriage Act of 1872.

The founders adopted a new constitution based on universal adult franchise. The old organisation went into oblivion. The new Samaj is active even today, with its branches all over the country. It has followed the path of constitu-

tionalism and radical reformism. Its programmes include the removal of the *purdah* system, introduction of widow remarriage, abolition of polygamy and early marriage and provision of higher education for women. It has attacked rigidities based on the caste system. Intercaste commensal relations have been encouraged by the Samaj. Emphasis on monotheism continues to be its primary ideal.

The Prarthana Samaj

The Prarthana Samaj, an offshoot of the Brahmo Samaj, came into existence in 1867 under the leadership of Justice Mahadev Govinda Ranade. Keshub was a source of inspiration for this organisation. The followers of the Prarthana Samaj never looked upon themselves as adherents of a new religion or of a new sect, outside and alongside of the general Hindu body, but simply as a movement within it. They were staunch theists in the Vaishnavite tradition of Maharashtra. The saints, like Namdeo, Tukaram and Ramdas influenced them to a large extent. They devoted themselves to social reforms such as inter-caste dining and marriages, remarriage of widows, and improvement of the lot of women and depressed classes. The Samaj founded the following organisations and institutions: (1) a foundling asylum and orphanage at Pandharpur; (2) night schools; (3) a widow's home; and (4) a depressed classes mission.

Justice Ranade devoted his life to the Prarthana Samaj. He contributed to the formation of the Widow Marriage Association in 1861, and the Deccan Education Society in 1884-85. Ranade conveyed two things: (1) the whole man was his concern; and (2) there was continuity even in face of radical transformation. He advocated that these two should become a part of the reformist's philosophy.

The Arya Samaj

The Arya Samaj was founded in 1875 by Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-83). He was a Sanskrit scholar with no English education. He

cond objective was taken up by Swami Vivekananda after Ramakrishna's death. Vivekananda carried the message of Ramakrishna all over India. He was an eloquent speaker with a charming personality. Vivekananda's followers included people of all strata—both princes and priests. In 1893, he attended the famous "Parliament of Religions" at Chicago. He delivered lectures on Hindu philosophy as enunciated by Ramakrishna Paramahansa at various places in the U.K. and the U.S.A.

The headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission are at Belur, near Calcutta. This centre was established in 1898 by Swami Vivekananda. The Math is a religious trust dedicated to the nursing of the inner spiritual life of the members of the monastery. The Mission is a charitable society dedicated to the expression of inner spiritual life in outward collective action in the service of men. The Belur Math is headquarters of both the Math and the Mission. Both the organisations have close links, and are almost inseparable from each other. The Mission stands for religious and social reform. The Vedantic doctrine is its ideal. Its emphasis is on the development of the highest spirituality inherent in man. Certain spiritual experiences of Ramakrishna, the teachings of the Upanishads and the Gita, and the examples of the Buddha and Jesus are the basis of Vivekananda's message to the world about human values. He wanted to make the Vedanta practical. His mission was to bridge the gulf between *paramartha* (service) and *vyavahara* (behaviour), and between spirituality and day-to-day life. He advocated the doctrine of service—the service of all beings. The service of *jiva* (live objects) is the worship of Siva. Life itself is religion. By service, the Divine exists within man. Vivekananda was for using technology and modern sciences in the service of mankind.

The Mission has been in existence for 87 years. It has developed into a world-wide organisation. The Mission is a deeply religious body; but it is not a proselytising body. It is not a sect of Hinduism. In fact, this is one of the strong reasons for the success of the Mission. The

Mission has given top priority to the idea of social service; both in terms of philanthropic work and upliftment of religious and spiritual life. It has been successful in propagating the universal principle of Vedanta and giving a true picture of India to the western world. "It believes that the philosophy of Vedanta will make a Christian a better Christian and a Hindu a better Hindu."

The Mission has opened many schools and dispensaries, and helped the victims of natural calamities. Missions of men and women suffering from dumbness have been helped by the Mission. There were over 138 branches of the Mission in 1961. Of these 102 were in India and the rest of them were in other countries, including the US, England, France, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Burma and Singapore. In 1961, there were 12 indoor hospitals and 68 outdoor dispensaries run by the Mission. About 65,000 boys and girls studied in the Mission's schools and colleges in 1961. The Mission has published books on the Vedanta, and it publishes about ten journals and magazines in English and other Indian languages.

The Servants of India Society

Like other nineteenth century organisations for socio-religious reforms, the Servants of India Society undertook various welfare programmes in the early twentieth century. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, a liberal leader of the Indian National Congress, founded the society in 1905. The aim of the Society was to train "national missionaries for the service of India, and to promote, by all Constitutional means, the true interests of the Indian people." Its members were called upon "to devote their lives to the cause of the country in a religious spirit." It was a society dedicated to the service of the country. Its aim was to prepare a cadre of selfless workers.

Srinivasa Shashtri succeeded Gokhale as its president, after Gokhale's death in 1915. Some of the members devoted themselves to selfless politics, others took up welfare activities. In 1911, Narayan Malhar Joshi, a follower of Gokhale,

founded the Social Service League in Bombay. Its aim was "to secure for the masses of the people better and reasonable conditions of life and work". In 1926, they ran 17 night schools, 3 free day schools, 11 libraries and reading rooms, and 2 day nurseries. They organised over a hundred cooperative societies. Other activities included Police Court Agent's work, legal advice and aid to the poor and illiterate, excursions for slum-dwellers, facilities for gymnasias and theatrical performances, sanitary work, medical relief and Boys' Clubs and Scout Corps. Joshi also founded the All-India Trade Union congress in 1920.

In 1914, Hriday Nath Kunzru founded the Seva Samiti at Allahabad. The Samiti undertakes activities related to the promotion of education, sanitation and cleanliness. It organises social service activities during fairs, famines, floods, epidemics and on the occasion of the Kumbha Mela.

A follower of the Samiti, Shri Ram Bajpai founded the Seva Samiti Boy Scout's Association in 1914. Its aim was the complete Indianisation of the Boy Scout Movement in India.

The Theosophical Society

The Theosophical Society was founded in 1880 by Madam H.P. Blavatsky and Colonel H.S. Olcott. Later on, Mrs Annie Besant took up the leadership of this organisation to revive and strengthen Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism. Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghose, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi also made use of the Upanishads and the epics for making India a secular state, and for effecting social reforms. Gandhi did tremendous work for the removal of untouchability.

- (9) the rules laid down by the Government and rules suggested by reason should be observed;
- (10) everybody should strive for the growth of learning; and
- (11) truth should be the abiding principle of conduct.

These canons of conduct show that India was trying to rejuvenate its socio-cultural fabric and make a dignified place for itself in the changed circumstances. It had become necessary to change, to discard and to adopt some elements simultaneously. Striving for synthesis had become a necessity. Condemnation of ritual paraphernalia, caste system, rules of marriage, and of differences between the sexes had become absolutely necessary.

The Satyashodhak Samaj Movement

Jotiba Phule organised a powerful movement against the Brahmanas in Maharashtra. He started a school for girls; one for the "untouchables", and a home for widows. He challenged the supremacy of the Brahmanas. His two writings—*Sarvajanik Satyadharma Pustak* and *Gulamgiri* became sources of inspiration for the common masses. He founded the *Satyashodhak Samaj* to carry out his crusade against the Brahmana hegemony. The Satyashodhak Samaj (Truth Seekers Society), besides being anti-Brahmanic, had a programme of positive action for women's liberation, propagating education, and for economic betterment. Mahatma Phule used the symbol of Rajah Bali as opposed to the Brahmin's symbol of Rama. The middle castes, the Kunbis, Malis and Dhangars developed a sense of identity as a class against Brahmins who were thought of as exploiters. In the 1900s the Maharaja of Kolhapur encouraged the non-Brahmin movement. The movement spread to the southern states in the first decade of twentieth century. Kammas, Reddis and Vellalas, the powerful intermediate castes, joined hands against the Brahmins. The Muslims also joined them.

The S.N.D.P. Movement

A number of backward class movements were launched in the pre-independence period. These were similar to Mahatma Phule's Satyashodhak Samaj Movement, with the similar aim of ending oppression by the Brahmins. The Brahmins were the first to exploit modern educational and employment opportunities. The upper non-Brahmin castes failed to get access to these opportunities. The Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana (S.N.D.P.) movement, among the Izhavas of Kerala, is an example of conflict between the depressed classes and the upper non-Brahmin castes. The Izhavas were a caste of toddy-tappers in Kerala. They were like the Nadars of Tamil Nadu and the Idigas of Karnataka. The Izhavas were the largest single caste group constituting 26 per cent of the total population of Kerala. In a developing country like India, movements led by the backward classes speak of their low status, disadvantages, discriminations and deprivations which they suffered for a long time at the hands of the ruling classes and communities.

The S.N.D.P. movement is an example of a "regional" movement. The S.N.D.P. movement pertains to the Izhavas of Kerala who were untouchables. The ideology of the movement was formulated by Sri Narayana Guru Swamy. He formed a programme of action known as the S.N.D.P. Yogam. The Yogam took up several issues, including the right of admission to public schools, recruitment to government employment, entry into temples, on roads and political representation. Most of these objectives were realised. The movement as a whole brought about transformative structural changes which included upward social mobility, a shift in the traditional distribution of power, and a federation of "backward castes" into a large conglomeration.

Caste reform and mobility movements were launched in almost all parts of India during the British period. These movements had two objectives: (1) to protest against hegemony of Brah-

localised in Bengal, Maharashtra, Punjab, etc. Their impact was generally limited to the educated, upper middle and middle classes. Assimilation of the values of rationalism, universal brotherhood, freedom of man and equality of sexes was not so easy with the Indian tradition and culture. These movements have been called "denationalised and hyper-westernised" by some critics. It is certainly undeniable that these movements made tremendous and everlasting impact in terms of socio-cultural awakening against social evils.

Conclusion

We have discussed in detail some selected socio-religious reform movements; namely, the Brahmo Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, Arya Samaj, Ramak-

rishna Mission, Servants of India Society, Theosophical Society, Movements among Muslims, Sikhs and Parsis, Swadeshi movement, Satya-Shodhak Samaj movement, S.N.D.P. movement and tribal movements in the pre-Independence period. These movements strived at a synthesis of traditional and modern cultural values. All of them discarded dogmatism, ritualism and orthodoxy, and worked for the welfare of women and deprived sections of society. They were all against British colonialism and its negative effects on Indian society. Social evils like Sati, child marriage, purdah, etc. were condemned. Widow remarriage, women's education, inheritance of property for women and intercaste marriages were encouraged. Education, social awakening, national pride and egalitarianism were promoted by various organisations initiating several welfare projects.

EXERCISES

1. Bring out the salient features of the Brahmo Samaj.
2. Was Ram Mohan Roy Truly the father of modern Indian renaissance?
3. One common goal of all the socio-religious reform movements was the achievement of synthesis of traditional and modern values. Comment.
4. In what way did various movements advocate the upliftment of women and backward classes?
5. Explain the following:
 - i. Cultural movement
 - ii. Political movement
 - iii. Reform movement.
6. Discuss similarities and differences between the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj.
7. In what way was the Ramakrishna Mission a mix of Hinduism, Islam and Christianity?
8. Prepare notes on the following:
 - i. The philosophy of Vedanta
 - ii. Sati
 - iii. Child marriage
 - iv. The S.N.D.P. movement
 - v. Mahatma Jotiba Phule
 - vi. Hinduism

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Chapter IV

National Movement: Its Sociological Implications

Introduction

Indian society had divisions based on religion, region, tribe, caste and language; and the British not only perpetuated these but accentuated them further so that the Indian people could not unite against British rule in India. The various castes and communities were allowed to retain their names and titles. Associations, institutions and regiments were named after particular castes and communities. Muslims were encouraged to make demands for separate electorates and ultimately for the formation of Pakistan. Muslim communalism was mainly a product of the British policy of "divide and rule". In this chapter we will discuss the early phase of national awakening, the emergence of the Indian National Congress, the role of "the moderates" and "the extremists" in the Congress, the emergence of Mahatma Gandhi, and above all the communalistic and divisive policy of the British.

In this context, political awakening, education, communalism and caste have been identified as major sociological facts of India's struggle against the British for achieving freedom. In fact, they are not independent phenomena. At times they cut across each other and find themselves in contradistinction, but they have also been found co-existent during the national movement for India's freedom.

Socio-Economic Conditions at the Advent of the British

The British Raj had to overcome several adminis-

trative difficulties arising from divisions in Indian society based on religion, region, tribe, language and caste. At the same time, the British did not want India to modernise, fearing revolts against themselves. In many ways they, in fact, encouraged the divisive tendencies to prevent unity among various sections of Indian society. The British did their best to keep the people divided on the basis of caste, community, religion and region.

The caste system was the essence of the social life of the Hindus. Caste panchayats regulated its members in regard to choice of occupations, selection of mates, inter-caste relations and channels for social mobility. Caste prejudices were very strong. Even in the army, Brahmins and Rajputs were allowed to observe their caste rules and regulations. They had their own separate cooking pots and *lotas*. Sea voyage was regarded as defilement. The British gave army regiments names such as Rajput Rifles and Jat Regiment. Some communities, such as the Yadavas have for a long time been demanding a regiment named after their caste.

The native princely states and their feudatories supported these reactionary policies of the Raj. The trading communities and the service classes were also not averse to the retrograde steps taken by the government. The government did it with its famous policy of "divide and rule". Whatever the reformers were doing was being undone by the British Raj. After the revolt of 1857, the British government made a show of adopting a

educated middle class as it interfered with the autonomy of the universities and higher institutions of learning.

- (6) The Swadeshi movement and the boycott of foreign goods also started in the first decade of this century.

The year 1905 is important for many reasons. Bengal was partitioned. Open conflicts and tensions began within the Indian National Congress in 1905. The last one was directly related to the national movement.

The Partition of Bengal, 1905

Lord Curzon came to India (1899–1905) with a strong determination to stem the rising tide of nationalism. The Calcutta Cooperation Act, the Indian Universities Act (1904), and the Official Secrets Act (1904) were some of the measures through which Curzon sought to curb the growing nationalistic and patriotic spirit. The partition of Bengal was Curzon's most unpopular measure. On 20 July 1905 Lord Curzon announced the partition of Bengal into two parts: Eastern Bengal and Assam (one part) and the rest of Bengal (the other part). Curzon announced the partition on the pretext of administrative convenience as he considered the existing province of Bengal too big and unwieldy to be effectively administered. However, the Indian National Congress and nationalists saw that it was a part of the policy of "divide and rule".

This measure provoked violent opposition from the people of Bengal, as the Bengalis felt humiliated and insulted. The anti-partition movement was started on 7 August 1905 at Calcutta to boycott English goods, and adopt swadeshi (indigenous) goods.

The response of the people was speedy and spontaneous. A day of national mourning was observed throughout Bengal as the partition took effect on 16 October 1905. Rabindranath Tagore composed a national song for the occasion. The streets of Calcutta rang with the cries of *Bande Mataram*. It was followed by hundreds of public meetings, demonstrations, picketing of shops, bonfires of foreign goods, clashes with the

police, imprisonment of volunteers and expulsion of students from colleges and universities.

A remarkable aspect of the swadeshi movement was the active participation of women, prominent Muslims like Abdul Rasul, Liaquat Husain Guznavi and particularly of students. It was the students who showed the greatest enthusiasm and created swadeshi spirit in Bengal during the agitation. However, the movement did not really involve or affect the masses of Bengal.

The swadeshi movement spread to other parts of India towards the end of 1905. Tilak played a leading role in giving the swadeshi movement an all-India character. Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghose were dissatisfied with the old leadership (Moderates) and its policy of constitutional protest. They wanted to force the hand of the government and to extort concessions not by prayer but by action. The leadership of the Anti-Partition Movement soon passed to militant nationalists. The differences between the "extremists" and "moderates" came to a head at the Surat session of Congress in 1907.

Congress was ideologically divided into moderates and extremists. The leaders of the moderate group (naram dal) were Pherozeshah Mehta, Surendranath Banerjea and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. They admired British political institutions and trusted British rulers. Constitutionalism was their approach for enacting reforms. The extremists did not approve of the policy of the lawyer-dominated politics of petition and prayer. Pressure and active resistance were adopted as their main tactics. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal were the leaders of the extremists (garam dal). They believed in militant means for achieving wider national goals. They boycotted British goods. However, upto 1916, the moderates remained in a commanding position in the Indian National Congress.

Terrorism emerged in western India, Bengal and the Punjab due to popular sentiments against the British. This heightened national consciousness. Terrorism resulted into quick action

by the Raj to enact reforms and political change. Everything British (not only goods) was boycotted—the boycott being extended to government and government-aided educational institutions, the courts and executive bodies. Such aversion to all things British led to constructive and nation-building efforts on the one hand and glorification of the Indian (specially Hindu) heritage on the other.

Muslim separatism crystallised with the formation of the Muslim League in 1906. Since the League was opposed to Hindu domination it supported the partition of Bengal and opposed the anti-British boycott. A demand was made for separate electorates for Muslims. Finally, the Indian National Congress was influenced by developments in the international arena.

✓ Constitutional and Other Reforms

In 1909, the Morley-Minto Reforms were initiated under which: (1) the principle of election to the central legislature, provincial legislatures, municipalities, district boards, chambers of commerce and universities was recognised. The landholders and others were granted the right to vote; and (2) the reforms of 1909 introduced a communal electorate by creating a number of Muslim constituencies for the Centre as well as provinces.

In 1919, the Montagu-Chemsford Reforms were approved. The bicameral system was introduced at the Centre: (1) the Council of States, and (2) the Legislative Assembly. About 70 per cent of the members were elected to these councils. The principle of direct election was recognised. Separate electorates were maintained for Muslims, Anglo-Indians, Europeans, Sikhs and Christians, and for non-Brahmins in Madras. Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi were of the view that the reforms should be implemented on a trial basis.

In 1920, Gandhi launched a non-violent and non-cooperation movement; at the same time rejecting the reforms. The Ali brothers (Shaukat Ali and Muhammad Ali), the pioneers of the Khilafat movement, joined hands with the Ma-

hatma in the national struggle against the British. The peasants and workers were also drawn into the struggle against the British. The non-cooperation movement, a revised form of the swadeshi, urged people to resign from government offices, shun the law-courts, withdraw from English schools and colleges, and boycott elections. The use of indigenous goods, khadi and homespun cloth was strongly advocated. Gandhiji was arrested and released in 1924.

The Congress party was a divided house consisting of (1) the Swaraj Party led by Motilal Nehru and C.R. Das; (2) the followers of Tilak; (3) the Justice Party of Madras; and (4) the Independents led by Jinnah. Consequently, there was no cohesion in the Indian National Congress. The Muslims betrayed the Congress. Communal riots broke out in 1924. Terrorism again appeared. However, the Mahatma dedicated himself to restore communal harmony and for the upliftment of Harijans. The Hindu Mahasabha which was formed in 1915 also became active as a result of communal disturbances.

The government, without bothering about the popular sentiments against its policies, implemented the reforms of 1919. Elections were held. The central and the state governments were reconstituted. The Moplah rising (August, 1921) worsened communal relations. The non-cooperation movement was reactivated. A violent incident occurred at Chauri Chaura in Uttar Pradesh. The Khilafat movement weakened. Gandhiji was arrested in 1922, and with his arrest the non-cooperation movement came to a standstill. The Indian National Congress became weaker. Communalism raised its ugly head. Elections were fought on communal lines. Nationalist forces lost their vigour.

Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

In 1919, the British government passed the Rowlatt Act, which was an extremely repressive measure. This Act authorised the Government to imprison any person without trial and conviction in a court of law. Gandhi started

Satyagraha and called for a countrywide passive resistance movement in protest against the Act. To put down this movement, the government decided to meet the protest with repression; particularly in the Punjab under its Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Michael O'Dwyer. At the same time, two prominent leaders, Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlu and Dr. Satyapal, were arrested in Punjab. In protest against these arrests, an unarmed and defenceless crowd had gathered on 13 April, 1919 in Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar. Under the orders of General R.E.H. Dyer, British troops surrounded the garden, closed the only exit and mercilessly fired on the peaceful gathering. Thousands were killed and wounded. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre was indeed a dark tragedy. After this massacre, martial law was proclaimed in Punjab and people were submitted to the most inhuman atrocities and humiliating punishments. There were indiscriminate arrests, confiscation of property, floggings and whippings, and cutting off of water and electric supplies.

All these outrages shocked the people of India and raised a strong wave of discontent throughout the country. Rabindranath Tagore renounced his knighthood in protest against the Punjab tragedy. Congress boycotted the special committee headed by Lord Hunter to enquire into the killings. When Gandhiji came to know about the atrocities in the Punjab, he decided to break off his relations with the British and to start a non-violent campaign of non-cooperation with the British government.

Reactions to the Reforms

The visit of the Simon Commission to India to review the reforms of 1919 sparked off a new phase of nationalist agitation. A nation-wide agitation to boycott the Commission was launched. All the groups and factions, ignoring their differences, joined this protest. Since the Commission did not include a single Indian, it was greeted with black flags, strikes and mass demonstrations. Jawaharlal Nehru emerged as a national leader. He prepared a report which opposed separate electorates. Jinnah decided to

disassociate himself from this and joined hands with the Muslim separatists. A dominion status was demanded for India by the All Parties Conference. The British government rejected the demand. Congress observed "Independence Day" on January 26, 1930, and Mahatma Gandhi started his Dandi *satyagraha* (civil disobedience) on 12 March 1930. This aimed at making salt in defiance of the salt law. The civil disobedience movement spread all over the country. Gandhiji was arrested. Over 60,000 people were arrested and several were killed.

The Princes and non-Congress political parties and groups collaborated with the Raj. In the first Round Table Conference in 1930-31, Congress was not represented, but the Princes and other political parties and groups participated. Congress was represented in the second Round Table Conference; but to counter its weight, the Raj involved the non-Congress parties, in a big way. The Simon Commission had proposed self-government in the Provinces and a federation of British India and the Princes at the centre; but the proposal could not materialise due to lack of support of the Congress. Under the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, Gandhi and all the detainees were released, and Civil Disobedience was called off. But no solution could be found for electoral representation. Consequently, the Civil Disobedience started again, and Gandhiji was arrested shortly after his return from England. Lord Irwin's successor, Lord Willingdon, was hostile to the Congress. It was banned and over 1,20,000 persons were arrested. Gandhi also opposed the formation of a separate electorate for "Backward Classes", as decided by the British Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald in August, 1932.

Formation of Congress Ministries in Provinces

After the end of the Civil Disobedience campaign in May 1934, Congress undertook a constitutional programme. Meanwhile, Parliament passed the Government of India act, 1935, providing for an all-India federation and provincial autonomy. The federal part of the Act was never introduced but provincial autonomy came into

Chandra Bose's adventures abroad. During World War II, Bose escaped from India and went to Italy, Germany and Japan. With the help of Japanese, he formed the Azad Hind Fauj (the Indian National Army) in Singapore on 21 October, 1943. Its purpose was to conduct a military campaign for the liberation of India. He gave his famous call of "Delhi Chalo". He was assisted by Rash Behari Bose, an old revolutionary. A large number of Indian prisoners of war in Japanese camps and Indians of trading communities settled in South-East Asia joined the INA. The INA fought on the side of the Japanese to defeat the British and to liberate the country. Bose invaded Indian territory and had some initial success. Later on his army had to surrender. Bose is reported to have died in an air crash in 1945. He was undoubtedly an ardent patriot and, by organising the Azad Hind Fauj, he set an inspiring example of patriotism before the Indian people and the Indian Army.

The R.I.N. Mutiny

On 18 February 1946, the ratings of the Royal Indian Navy (R.I.N.) in the Signals training establishment *Talwar* went on a hunger-strike in protest against bad food, weakening of the old military tradition of recruitment and racist insults. It was a heroic rising against a long series of unsettled grievances. The rising was mainly centred in Bombay. By 19 February, it had spread to all the 20,000 ratings in the twelve shore establishments in Bombay and its suburbs as well as to the twenty ships in the harbour. The ratings elected a Naval Central Strike Committee and formulated a charter of demands which included the national political slogans of release of INA and other political prisoners. The ratings fought a seven hour battle with the army and navy on 21 February. Finally, on 23 February, Vallabhabhai Patel managed to persuade the ratings to surrender, by giving an assurance that "the Congress will do its level best to see that there is no victimisation". This was followed by a similar assurance from the Muslim League.

Gandhi tried to restore communal harmony,

but Jinnah did not agree to abandon elections based on communal basis. The ultimate result was India's partition in 1947. India and Pakistan were formed as two nations on 15 August 1947.

Political Awakening

The real beginning of the nationalist fervour dates back to the second half of the nineteenth century. Earlier, in the pre-1857 period, two contradictory ideas were expressed: (1) anti-British, and (2) pro-British. The pro-British ideas led to the emergence of nationalism and patriotism as a reaction to the devotion of the people to the principles of British administration and English education. The anti-British ideas resulted in several political and civil movements and uprisings. Both the stances were, in effect, against the Raj and for freedom of India. The atrocities perpetrated by the Raj reinforced the ideas of political awakening. The demand for political rights and social justice became a valued idea. The leaders of the freedom movement became eager for emancipation from the British yoke.

The revolt of 1857, also known as the first war of India's Independence, was the first signal expression of people's opposition to British rule in India. It is said: "What began as a fight for religion ended as a war of independence, for there is not the slightest doubt that the rebels wanted to get rid of the alien government and restore the old order, in which the king of Delhi was the 'rightful representative'." "March to Delhi" was the call given by the leaders of the mutiny.

The revolt of 1857 succeeded in winning over the zamindars, merchants, public servants, pundits and fakirs; as they thought that their interests could be protected by restoration of the pre-British rule. "The sepoys were fighting for their castes, the chiefs for their kingdoms, the landed classes for their estates, the masses for fear of conversion to Christianity and the Muslims in particular for the restoration of their old sway. Yet, all in their own way were fighting against the English." Thus, the revolt of 1857 involved all sections of Indian society under the leadership of the military. The revolt was followed by rebel-

lions in several parts of Bengal, Bihar and Punjab in particular. Organisations such as the Arya Samaj, Theosophical Society and Ramakrishna Mission also fostered political awakening through their religious and cultural preachings.

The intelligentsia were dead set against the Raj. The economic ruin of the country, the chronic poverty of the people and the recurrence of famines were some of the factors responsible for political awakening among the people. Insults to their pride also angered the intelligentsia against the British. Rude behaviour towards Indians, brutal assaults, maltreatment of servants and men in the street were common occurrences. Englishmen were not punished for such violations and offences. This discriminatory policy encouraged educated Indians to fight against British rule. Such a policy of discrimination against Indians was effectively implemented in recruitment of services including the Indian Civil Service. Indians were humiliated and dehumanised by the British to an unlimited extent. The British Indian Association was formed by educated Indians to fight these evils.

Prominent leaders of the early phase of political and national awakening were W.C. Bonnerjee, Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendranath Banerjee, Pherozeshah Mehta and Rajnarain Basu. In 1874, Kristodas Pal demanded Home Rule for India. In Maharashtra, M.G. Ranade gave the lead to the process of political awakening. In the north, the Arya Samaj leader Swami Dayanand Saraswati created anti-British feelings by giving a call to go back to the Vedas.

The Indian National Congress was founded by A.O. Hume in 1885 for the mental, moral, social and political regeneration of the people of India. A.O. Hume in consultation with leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, Badruddin Tyabji, Pherozeshah Mehta and others organised a conference at Bombay in 1885. The Congress developed into a powerful political organisation. It focussed the political ideas of English-educated Indians and gave them definite shape and form. Liberalism and a sense of justice were accepted as the cherished ideals of the Congress leaders. The Congress helped the

political advancement of the country, gave reality to the ideals of Indian unity, developed patriotic feelings and awakened political consciousness. However, several people made bitter and unfriendly criticism of the policies and actions of the Congress. The Muslims and Englishmen both considered it a threat to their existence. The Congress, despite the criticism, continued to work for the liberation and upliftment of the country.

Bankim Chandra Chatterji (1838-1894), the author of *Anandamath*, ridiculed Congress policies. So did Aurobindo Ghose (1872-1950). Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), however, upheld the mission of the Congress. A great scholar, politician and a man of action, Tilak devoted himself to liberating his countrymen from foreign rule. Tilak is known as the "Father of Indian Unrest". He spread the spirit of patriotism and nationalism among the masses. He made Shivaji a symbol of these virtues. Tilak, through his newspapers *Kesari* (in Marathi) and *Mahratta* (in English), advocated nationalist fervour through strong constitutional means. He decried the policy of mendicancy followed by the Congress. In Bengal, Bipin Chandra Pal (1858-1932) and in the Punjab, Lajpat Rai (1865-1928) followed Tilak's policy, and criticised Congress policy as that of one confined to a few English-educated persons. They also worked against the use of the English language and against support to the ruling authorities. Tilak demanded *swaraj* (self-government) rather than reforms in administration. He also gave a call for self-help and political agitation by the masses.

Rule is my birth-right and I will have it." While drawing a line between the moderates and Tilak's policy it is stated: "Formerly it was a Congress of petitioners, now it is a Congress of men and women determined to win their freedom." Ganapati and Shivaji festivals in modern Maharashtra are symbolic of Tilak's philosophy and practice.

The British government made all-round efforts to repress the revolutionaries, particularly in Maharashtra and West Bengal. Several legislations were passed to curb their activities. The newspapers and magazines managed by the revolutionaries were censored. Several people were hanged and killed on charge of sedition. The British adopted the policy of "Divide and Rule" to put the extremists against the moderates and the Hindus against the Muslims. This policy also meant passing of the Acts of 1909 and 1919 which appeased the moderates in the Congress. The revolutionary group in the Congress generated intense feelings of patriotism and nationalism, but did not produce any tangible results.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) emerged on the Congress scene as leader of the moderates. He launched Satyagraha in Africa against the humiliation of Indians. He also gave top priority to the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity which was endangered by the British rulers. The Lucknow session of the Congress in 1916 commented on the impaired relations between the two communities. Separate electorates for Muslims and Hindus were accepted at this session. Mahatma Gandhi's leadership of Congress was, in fact, the beginning of the constitutional reforms. However, Gandhiji started Satyagraha and non-cooperation movements (alongwith acceptance of legislative reforms) whenever he thought injustices were committed by the British Raj.

Gandhi transformed the Indian national movement into a people's movement for liberty. He supported the Khilafat cause, and hence strived for Hindu-Muslim unity. Non-cooperation was launched by Gandhi in 1920.

Under his leadership, the people surrendered titles and honorary offices and resigned their posts as nominated members in local bodies, law-courts and legislatures. The people boycotted foreign goods, adopted swadeshi cloth and refused to pay taxes.

It was decided to attain swaraj by all legitimate and peaceful means. Students left colleges and schools in large numbers. Lawyers gave up practice and people boycotted the elections held in 1920. The Indian National Congress also started constructive work to create feelings of self-help and discipline. The message of passive resistance and civil disobedience reached every part of the country. Gandhi toured various parts of the country to spread his philosophy among the masses.

In 1927, S. Srinivas Iyengar, Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose advocated "complete independence" instead of "Dominion Status" for India (as was demanded in 1917). This demand was reinforced in 1929, at the Lahore session of the Congress. Industrial workers, women and other sections of Indian society also started participating in India's struggle for independence. Civil disobedience and non-payment of unjust taxes had been adopted as an instrument to fight against the Raj. The British rulers, fearing a serious threat from the Congress, engineered a split between the Muslims and the Hindus by giving a communal award in 1932. Gandhiji worked towards unity between the two communities. However, the British were successful in propounding the "two nation theory". The communal situation deteriorated further due to the British policy of "divide and rule". The last phase of political awakening is reflected in the "Quit India Movement" launched on 9 August 1942. British rulers were called upon to leave India. The movement was a mass upheaval in which youth and students played a major role in threatening the Raj.

Education

A.R. Desai refers to three main agencies of modern education: (1) the foreign Christian

missionaries; (2) the British government; and (3) the progressive Indians. The missionaries attacked polytheism and the caste-based inequalities and lured people towards Christianity. They imparted education through mission schools; but only a few people converted to Christianity. The British government opened a large number of universities, colleges and schools which imparted modern knowledge. Liberal and technical ideas were spread by British government education despite its hostility to the rising wave of Indian nationalism. The British government spread modern education to produce clerks, managers and agents who would carry out the Raj's work in India; but the same educated Indians turned against the Raj at the opportune time. They boycotted schools and colleges, resigned jobs and joined the national movement. The call for *swadeshi* was welcomed by these young educated men and women.

The British believed that an English medium education for these young men and women was a political and economic necessity. However, Raja Ram Mohan Roy and several other reformers who were English educated emerged as saviours of India's cultural heritage and fighters against the social evils of Indian society. Deshmukh, Karve, Tilak, Gokhale, Malaviya and Gandhi were all educated in the English medium but were staunch nationalists. The national movement made them strong in their nationalist conviction. They emphasised the study of the Vedas, but they also studied the Quran and the Bible to have a more complete view of religion.

The Arya Samaj, which emphasised rejuvenation of Vedic culture, opened a chain of colleges and schools throughout the country. The Deccan Education Society, opened by Tilak and Agarkar, was another example of the nationalist ethos. The aim of the society was to prepare a band of people who could undertake educational reforms and national work for the upliftment of the country. Nationalist leaders opened vidyapiths in various states, such as Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh. Vishwa Bharati at Shantiniketan, the S.N.D.T. Women's Univer-

sity and the Jamia Millia are examples of such an effort by some dedicated Indians.

The British educational system was divorced from the realities of Indian society. It was made an instrument for training people who could serve the Raj. There was no emphasis on Indian culture, art, painting, people, economy, polity and religion. Educated Indian people did not know about their own society and culture. Nationalist leaders very well realised this lacuna. There was nothing "national" in the education imparted by British colleges and schools. Nor could English education become mass education. Thus widespread mass education, with a nationalist ethos, became the central concern of Indian nationalist forces.

Communalism

"Communalism was mainly the result of the peculiar development of the Indian social economy under British rule, of the uneven economic and cultural development of different communities, and of the action of the strategy both of the British government and the vested interests within those communities". The British thrived on communal divisions in India. They introduced the institutions of "communal award", "communal electorate", "communal representation" and also engineered "communal troubles" and ensured that they escalated. These are observations made by A.R. Desai and some other scholars. The national movement leaders had to fight the British Raj on the one hand, and the forces which divided the country on the other. The British rulers themselves were a big force that sponsored communal troubles in India, in accordance with their policy of "divide and rule".

The leaders of the Indian National Congress, under its programme of the Non-Cooperation Movement, strived for an united action of the Hindu and Muslim communities. However, some among the Hindus and some among the Muslims (who adhered to the ideology of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League, respectively) indulged in spreading communal

hatred in their respective communities against each other. Communal clashes occurred at various places in 1924-25. Since communalism proved to be a cancer to India's struggle for Independence, the national leaders decided to curb it effectively. The Indian national leaders, realised that religious feelings and sentiments were being exploited by the British rulers and by the reactionary elements within these two communities. They therefore assured the people that religion and particular beliefs and practices of the two communities would be respected, and religion would not be allowed to become an instrument of expression of political and economic expectations and aspirations.

The Muslims in India have been (the major minority group) at loggerheads with Hindus. At times they have feared repression, and at times the Hindus have been uneasy with the Muslims. This situation of mutual distrust was created by the British rulers through their policy of "divide and rule". The Muslims were not a monolithic community in India. They were divided into landlords and princes, professional groups, shopkeepers, moneylenders, peasants and workers. These classes like those among the Hindus had divergent and even conflicting interests. Neither did the Muslims share a common territory, language and standard of living. There was rivalry between the upper sections among the Muslims and their counterparts among the Hindus.

In general, the Muslims had lagged behind the Hindus. Jawaharlal Nehru has rightly observed, in his book *The Discovery of India*, that because the Muslims remained behind the Hindus by a generation or two, they have developed a psychology of fear. Nehru also observed in some other context that communal leaders inevitably tended to become reactionaries in political and economic matters. They used communal or religious demands as a cover for their own class interests. Their demands had nothing to do with the masses. This is how communalism was fostered by vested interests from among Hindus and Muslims in India.

The Wahabi Movement was the first organised effort by the Muslims for religious reforms. Subsequently, this movement turned into a political, anti-British movement. This movement could not survive after the revolt of 1857. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-98) organised the Muslims and urged them to adopt western education and culture. He was loyal to the Raj. Khan founded the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, which later was transformed into the Aligarh Muslim University. He opposed the Indian National Congress and dissuaded Muslims from joining it. Khan became the advocate of the Muslim middle classes and professional groups. He also supported communal electorates. A social and political awakening among the Muslim middle classes and their affiliation with the Raj were some of the concrete results of Sir Syed's movement.

The Muslim League was founded in 1906. It was "communal" and its leadership belonged to the upper classes of the Muslims. The League demanded separate representation for Muslims. The League expressed feelings of loyalty of the Muslims to the British government. It aimed at protecting the political and economic rights; and also at having friendly ties with other communities. At its Amritsar session in 1908, the League demanded representation for Muslims on the local boards and on the privy council and a percentage of the available government jobs.

The Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909 introduced a system of separate electorates and representation for the Muslims. Later on this was extended to the case of the Sikhs, the depressed classes, and other minority groups. The Act of 1935 provided separate electorates for several communities. The Raj also provided separate electorates for landholders, Europeans, merchants and industrialists. Thus, the Raj created political and economic divisions in terms of communities, classes, and interests. In this way the Raj was successful in putting one group against the other and in perpetuating its interests in India. The Muslims of India contributed a lot

lations between members of different caste groups. The caste system was thus based upon deep-seated inequalities—social, cultural, political and economic. Change in the system was not permitted as caste ranks were based on birth. The national movement could become effective if it involved people from all sections of Indian society, particularly the Hindus. So long as the caste system continued, it was not possible to make the movement wide-spread, egalitarian and democratic.

The English educational system no doubt spread ideas of rationalism, individualism, liberty and equality among people, but modern education did not reach the lower strata of Indian society. On the other hand, the British rulers encouraged caste distinctions with a view to keep the people divided and disunited. They adopted discriminatory policies towards various castes, communities, classes and associations. Some castes were granted decrees for higher status.

The British declared that the caste system was a very positive and useful system for the Hindus. They maintained details of each caste group in the census records. Their sole purpose was not to allow the emergence of a national consciousness against the British. However, the national movement was able to weaken parochial, caste, religious and regional considerations. The leaders of the national movement and other organisations decried caste and communal considerations by projecting secular values.

Social reform movements like the Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj and Prarthana Samaj attacked caste-based inequality and segregation. They attacked the theory of karma, pollution-purity, untouchability, hereditary division of labour and birth as the basis of status determination. In an earlier chapter we have discussed the anti-caste stance of these reform organisations. However, there were certain organisations which advocated perpetuation of the caste system. The communal award of 1932, separate electorates for Muslims, Sikhs and other groups and classes

were the main obstacles created in the path of the freedom struggle.

The sympathetic policy and attitude of the Raj towards the caste system encouraged caste mobility movements. These movements strengthened the caste system rather than weakening it. Apparently the process of Sanskritisation, under which lower caste people imitate the life-styles of upper caste people, attacks the dominant position of the latter; but in reality such a process of change causes even more dissensions and divisions in the existing caste system. In this process the lower caste people discard their traditional occupations and life-styles to copy the occupations and life-styles of the upper castes. They are not generally successful in getting better alternative sources of livelihood. What they achieve is an imitation of some cultural traits of the upper castes; but the upper castes immediately stop valuing these traits. Thus, the net result of such a process of caste mobility is horizontal changes; that is, changes within the system, and not of the system.

Manatma Gandhi fought against the caste system as it degraded and dehumanised the lower and the "untouchable" castes. He gave the name Harijan, children of God, to these caste groups. Gandhi founded the All-India Harijan Sangh for this purpose in 1932. Gandhi's greatest mission was his crusade against untouchability. Gandhi did his best to upgrade the Harijans by keeping them in the forefront of the national movement.

B.R. Ambedkar, a Harijan himself, joined Gandhi in this endeavour of Harijan upliftment. Ambedkar fought against caste tyranny and the disabilities imposed upon the Harijans. He demanded allowing entry of Harijans into temples and other religious and public places. The Constitution of India has a provision for the abolition of untouchability. The practice of untouchability today is a cognizable criminal offence under the law of the country.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have discussed major

sociological trends during the period of the freedom struggle. The main point is that the British tried to block the emergence of egalitarian values, national consciousness and a united front against their rule in India. They promoted communal, caste, regional and religious forces to keep the people fighting within themselves and to remain divided against the Raj. The nationalist forces fought against the British despite these heavy odds. They also

fought against the social evils of Indian society which obstructed the freedom struggle. In fact, the freedom struggle proved to be a struggle not only against British rule, but also against the caste system, untouchability, oppression of women and Harijans, communalism and regionalism. It was, in fact, a movement towards regeneration of the people and their nationalist sentiments to fight against the Raj.

EXERCISES

1. Describe the socio-economic and political conditions at the beginning of the British rule in India.
2. Bring out the main features of the early phase of nationalism.
3. Discuss the following:
 - i. Partition of Bengal
 - ii. Factionalism in the Congress in the early period.
 - iii. Constitutional reforms of 1909 and 1919.
 - iv. Jallianwala Bagh massacre.
 - v. Formation of Congress ministries in provinces in 1937.
 - vi. Indian National Army (I.N.A.).
 - vii. Communal Award by the British.
4. Write an essay on the role of Gandhi in India's struggle for freedom.
5. Discuss the main highlights of political awakening in India.
6. Highlight the main features of the educational system in the British period and its impact on Indian society.
7. Explain the historical and social factors of communalism in India.
8. In what way was the caste system not conducive to the cause of India's freedom struggle?

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Chapter V

Tribal Life in India

Introduction

Tribal settlements, villages and towns are the three main components of India's social formation. A sharp distinction between tribe and village and between village and town cannot, however, be easily drawn due to some common characteristics shared by them. There are big tribal villages in some parts of the country and they are not significantly different from non-tribal, multi-caste villages. Distinctions based on kinship, wealth and power among some tribes are as sharp as we find among the non-tribal villages. Tribes are not theoretically, a part of Hindu social organisation; but they have always been in touch with wider society in India. They have been exploited economically and socially by the non-tribals living in tribal areas. A number of tribes have revolted against this exploitation.

Tribal Identity in India

Article 46 of India's Constitution states: "The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation." There are, however, tribes who are not Scheduled Tribes are generally weaker sections of India's population, like the Scheduled Castes. The tribes are backward, particularly in the fields of education and economy. They were exploited by the dominant sections of Indian society, namely, "Hindu landlords", money-lenders and industrialists who purchased their lands to establish industries

in tribal areas. Forest produce, which tribals bring to the markets for sale, are bought at throwaway prices.

A number of tribes have been "Hinduised" or converted to Christianity or Islam to break away from their tribal identity, to get redemption from exploitation and to elevate their status and honour. Sometimes it becomes difficult to draw a clear line between a tribal and a caste group. There are hunters and food gatherers among the tribals on the one end, and there are tribals settled in villages, practically functioning as "caste groups" on the other.

Tribals have a strong sense of their distinctiveness and separate themselves from non-tribals, Jatis, Christians and Muslims. Language is one of the strong traits by which they identify themselves. The Mundas, Santhals and Hos are identified as distinct tribes on the basis of their spoken languages (besides other attributes). A large number of tribals in India live in hilly and forested areas where population is sparse and communication difficult. They are spread over the entire sub-continent, but are found mainly in the states of West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Defining Tribal Society

Mandelbaum writes: "In tribal life the principal links for the whole society are based on kinship". Kinship is not simply a principle of social organisation, it is also a principle of inheritance, division of labour and distribution of power and privileges. Tribal societies are small in scale. They possess a morality, religion and worldview

of their own, corresponding to their social relations. However, some tribes such as Santhals, Gonds and Bhils are quite large.

Sahlins writes that the term "tribal society" should be restricted to "segmentary systems". The segmentary systems have relations on a small scale. They enjoy autonomy, and are independent of each other in a given region. We may observe this about the Santhals, Oraons and Mundas of Bihar or about the Bhils, Bhil Meenas and Garasias of Rajasthan. Castes are "organic" in nature, as each caste is part of an organic whole in terms of the Jajmani system, commensality and connubiality. The principle of organic relationship explains inter-dependence of various caste groups upon each other in social life. Caste groups are hierarchically arranged on the basis of certain ascriptive criteria.

Distinctions between "folk", "peasant" and "urban" or between "tribal", "folk" and "elite" are not very useful for the understanding of tribes in India. For example, the tribes of Bihar have been interacting and cooperating with each other, despite geographical barriers, problems of communication, relative cultural autonomy and economic self-reliance; as they faced a common external threat to their traditional system of land relations, economy and cultural autonomy. The Hindu zamindars, Bengali moneylenders and the British administration exploited them, pushing them to the point of extinction and utter dehumanisation. There was never inter-tribal isolation and cultural exclusiveness. The tribals of Bihar mobilised their members against their exploiters. They interacted with the administration, town elite and outsiders. The Jharkhand area, which contains numerous tribes of Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, is a tribal cultural zone comprising several tribal sub-cultures. The Mundas, Oraons, Hos and Santhals—the major tribes of this region—depend upon forest produce, settled agriculture, employment in industries, coal mines and government jobs. Some have settled in towns, others are in villages, and some of the latter are economically very well off. Thus, tribal culture is in part a

"peasant culture" and in part an "urban culture".

Tribal exclusiveness, intact tribal solidarity and tribal consciousness on the one hand, and dependence upon towns and cities, administration and mobilisation against their exploiters on the other, have existed simultaneously among the tribal people. Even the revival of tribal aboriginality has been expressed in the form of an instrument for protesting against the external intrusions and impositions of rules and regulations. The tribals of Bihar are peasants to a large extent, and therefore their 'peasant qualities' should become the basis for understanding of their economic problems. The characteristics of peasant societies, outlined by Theodore Shanin, aptly apply to the tribals of Bihar. These are: (1) the peasant family farm is the basic unit of a multi-dimensional social organisation; (2) land husbandry is the main means of livelihood, directly providing the major part of the consumption needs; (3) specific traditional culture is related to the way of life of small communities, and (4) the peasants have the underdog position-domination of peasants by others. The tribes of Bihar have been called peasants by S.C. Roy. They have fought against feudalism for 300 years. Today, they are facing problems emerging out of industrial urbanisation in the Jharkhand region.

Tribal Social Structure

tribals in the 1930s. Tribes were distinguished from castes on the basis of their religious and ecological conditions.

However, tribals are also peasants, as a good number of them today live in villages and have been engaged in agriculture and allied occupations, just like peasants belonging to various castes and communities. Today there are more than thirty million tribals divided into 427 tribes. They form about 7 per cent of the total population. There is vast diversity among the tribes in terms of habitation, ecology, economic pursuits, language, religion and contacts with the outside world. Each tribe is internally stratified. It may be that members of a given tribe do not have a clear perception about their existential conditions or that they have a distorted or false consciousness.

The largest tribes of India are the Gonds of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh; the Bhils of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh; and the Santhals of Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal. The Gonds and the Bhils are more than four million each. The Santhals are more than three million. Roy-Burman divides tribal communities into five territorial groupings, taking into account their historical, ethnic and socio-cultural relations. These are as follows: (1) north-east India, comprising Assam, NEFA, Nagaland, Manipur and Tripura; (2) the sub-Himalayan region of north and north-west India, comprising hill districts of Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh; (3) Central and East India, comprising West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh; (4) South India comprising Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka; and (5) western India, comprising Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Tribes in India differ from one another in racial traits, language, social organisation, cultural pattern, etc. The dominant racial type among tribes is the proto-Austroloid. In the sub-Himalayan belt, the Mongoloid type is preponderant. The Mediterranean and the Negrito are found in other regions. Tribal languages belong to all the types: the Austric, Dravidian,

and Tibeto-Chinese. Tribal people are generally found to be bilingual. Some tribes have been assimilated into the Hindu fold, like the Bhumij and the Bhils. Some have been attracted by Christianity. The main occupations of the tribes are: (1) forestry and food-gathering; (2) shifting cultivation; (3) settled agriculture; (4) agricultural labour; (5) animal husbandry, and (6) household industry.

Social Stratification among Tribes of India

Andre Beteille, following N.K. Bose's classification, mentions language, religion and the degree of isolation as the main bases of classification of tribes. Beteille, however, considers the manner in which they make their living as the plainest way to arrange them into categories. Bose classifies the tribal people into three main categories: (1) hunters, fishers and gatherers; (2) shifting cultivators; and (3) settled agriculturists, using the plough and plough-cattle. Santhals, Gonds, Bhils, Oraons and Mundas fall into the last category. Their peasantry is not substantially different from the non-tribal peasants. These tribals are also categorised as cultivators, agricultural labourers and workers. They are working in factories in South Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and M.P., and in plantations in Assam, Bengal and some southern states. S.C. Roy describes the Oraon and Munda villagers as peasants. Furer-Haimendorf describes the Raj Gonds of Adilabad as peasants. F.G. Bailey refers to the Konds of Orissa as peasants.

Several anthropologists have observed social stratification among the members of a specific tribe. S.C. Roy has listed a number of groups in an Oraon village in terms of their different occupations. The Oraons have also been classified on the basis of their tenurial status. Roy mentions the presence of "peasant proprietors" or various categories of raiyats. There are various endogamous groups such as Mahalis, Ghasis and Lohras. The Mundas too have settled agriculture and division of labour within the family. The Mundas had the Khuntkatti—system of land tenure. this syste

were: (1) the Khuntkattidars, (2) the parjas or raiyats, and (3) the subsidiary castes (service groups). The Khuntkatti system lost its significance due to the introduction of individual ownership of land and the intervention by moneylenders and zamindars into tribal life (during British Raj). Ghurye calls tribal people "backward Hindus"

Tribe and Caste

Mandelbaum observes a slow shift from tribe to caste. He writes: "There is no absolute cultural or social distinction between all tribal and all caste peoples, but rather a range of variation between tribal and caste traits". Tribes and castes have certain cultural traits in common: in regard to the nature of ritual purity and pollution, the worship of local spirits, and in kinship practices. The broad aspects of distinction between the two are: (1) social; (2) political; (3) economic; (4) religious; and (5) psychological. Despite distinctions in these aspects, there is a shift toward Jati values. The shift is in the areas of styles of life, customs, dietary patterns, rituals, hierarchy, factions and feuds, sanskritic religion and worldview. Tribal groups have imitated caste groups in these spheres.

Historian D.D. Kosambi reports that the tribes of the Gangetic plain were conquered by and assimilated into the kingdoms of Kosala and Magadha in the sixth century B.C. From ancient areas until the British Raj, Tribals frequently raided non-tribals. The British deplored the assimilation of tribal groups into the caste system. They might have thought of this combination of tribe and caste as a serious threat. It was their political move to stop the integration of tribes and castes. Sir Herbert H. Risley observed that the tribes were transforming into castes since 1873. This process of transformation might be termed as sanskritisation or Hinduisation.

administration, agrarian issues, economic development, movements, leadership, and problems of integration. The survey by B.K. Roy-Burman shows that the tribals are the most backward. The rate of literacy is low, and the economy is primitive. In as many as 285 taluqs (sub-divisions), they constitute 50 per cent or more of the total population. The tribal situation is not uniform in all the parts of India. In the north-east, the situation has been disturbed for several years; whereas in the mainland (central India) problems related to poverty, unemployment, indebtedness, backwardness and ignorance are acute. The tribals of the north-east have a high level of politicisation, literacy, and a high standard of living compared to the tribes in other parts.

✓ **The Process of Change among Tribes of India**
Tribes are becoming conscious, both socially and politically, of maintaining and preserving their ethnic and cultural identity and also of protecting themselves against exploitation by *dikkus* (outsiders). They have stressed their political solidarity. This may, however, result in a new form of ecological-cultural isolation. Tribes have generally taken such steps due to their economic backwardness and a feeling of frustration.

"tribes", "criminal tribes", "scheduled tribes" and "scheduled castes" are misleading. He believes that these expressions are unfortunate and unwise. "It has conditioned our attitude towards these communities of peoples and our approach towards the solution of their problems which are theirs as much as the rest of the Indian population." From the point of view of Indian nationalism Ray makes the following observations:

- (1) Tribes are *janas* or peoples, just like the peoples of other territorial and cultural regions of India. Tribes or *janas* differ from other communities in terms of the socio-economic system of jati to which non-tribal Hindu communities belong. Ray writes: "Jati is not caste nor is it just a socio-religious system; it is also an economic system, hereditarily and hierarchically organised according to groups recruited by birth."
- (2) There is a sharp distinction between "incorporation" and "integration". The tribes have been incorporated rather than integrated into the jati-fold by placing them at different hierarchical levels of the system, generally at the lower levels. Even this process has been slow, and it has also become redundant because of considerable fluidity in the caste system. There is a need, therefore, to draw them into the new techno-economy, a new production system.
- (3) There is a need to understand the stresses and strains being suffered by the tribals due to the quicker tempo of modern life, new legal, administrative and economic systems.
- (4) The tribal people have migrated to other places from their birth places due to economic and other hardships. They have also joined the army.
- (5) The nomenclatures — "scheduled tribes", "denotified tribes" and "scheduled castes" have inherent seeds of division.
- (6) Tribes today are in search of a sense of identity, of a sense of belonging and for

self-determination in a new social order. Several new states have been formed in the north-eastern region. The demand for the formation of a separate state of Jharkhand for Adivasis of Bihar and adjoining districts of other states is indicative of this new identity.

Ray writes: "Any consideration in the contemporary context, of the traditional Hindu method of tribal absorption is therefore, sheer madness to my mind. In the present context this is simply anachronistic". But the fact of the matter is that a large number of major tribes have either Hinduised or converted to Christianity and Islam. These processes of change and mobility have no doubt reduced the gap between tribals and non-tribals, but have also created factions and feuds between the non-converts and the converts. A sharp line is drawn in Bihar between the tribals converted to Christianity and those who continue to adhere to their traditional way of life.

Conclusion

Tribes are generally backward, economically as well as educationally. To protect against injustices done to them and to bring them up with other sections of society, the Constitution of India has granted them special concessions for their upliftment. There are some tribes who have not been "scheduled" as weaker sections by the Constitution. Generally, tribes are distinct from non-tribes; particularly from caste groups and other non-caste communities like Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, etc. Tribal people have been victims of exploitation by non-tribals for centuries.

A strong sense of identity is prevalent among the tribes of India. Language, religious and magical beliefs and practices, food habits, styles of dress, pattern of habitation and dependence upon forest produce are important features of their life which make them distinct from non-tribal groups. Kinship is the key principle of social organisation; as it governs major social,

juridical, economic and political activities of their life.

Tribal societies are of a small size. There is not much social interaction between people of different tribes. However, intra-tribal solidarity has been strong. Tribal culture is in-part peasant culture, in-part it has its exclusiveness, and in-part it has taken elements from urban culture. Tribal people are differentiated like non-tribal people in terms of wealth, power and accessibility to resources and opportunities. We have men-

tioned broad distinctions between tribe and caste, and also the direction of change from tribe to caste. Today, the main problem of tribals is not of integration or assimilation with castes and communities in India. Their main problems are of poverty, unemployment, indebtedness, backwardness and ignorance. There are indications of inter-tribal solidarity, movements, and concerted action against their exploitation and suppression.

EXERCISES

1. List the main socio-cultural characteristics of tribes of India.
2. Explain the following:
 - i. Kinship
 - ii. Segmentary and organic systems
 - iii. Inter-tribal and intra-tribal solidarity.
3. In what ways are tribes different from caste groups?
4. Bring out distinctions between tribal, peasant and urban cultures
5. What are the main bases of social stratification among the tribes of India?
6. Discuss processes of change among the tribes, with particular reference to isolationist and assimilationist perspectives.
7. Write an essay on the major economic problems of the tribals in India

SELECT REFERENCES

Chapter VI

Village and Urban Communities in India

Introduction

There are some common characteristics village and town. The two are dependent upon each other, particularly in the field of economy. People from villages migrate to towns and townsmen depend upon them for manual labour and produces like foodgrains, milk and raw materials. Despite this dependence between these two components, there are some distinctive features which separate them from each other in terms of their cultural ethos, styles of life, economy, employment and social relations. In this chapter we will discuss village and urban social structure, their interrelations, changes in the village community and urbanisation.

The Village Community

It is rightly said that India is a country of villages. There are more than six lakh villages. Village, caste and joint family are three crucial institutions of India's social life. They have survived not only the onslaught of foreign invasion and internal contradictions, but also absorbed new forces of social and cultural change and adapted themselves to the demands and challenges posed to them. We will discuss the caste system and joint family later on. Here we intend to provide a bird's eye-view of the salient features of the Indian village community.

The Village Community in Ancient India

According to *Apastamba Dharma Sutra*, state officials (*Adhyaksas* or *Adhipas*) were to be appointed by the kings for towns and villages with well defined jurisdictions. In *Visnu Smṛti*, it

is written that a chain of officials is to be placed by the king in charge of 1, 10 and 100 villages as well as of the whole rural area. According to Kautilya, three tiers of officials were to be in charge of the rural as well as the urban areas. The *Samaharta* or the *Pradesta* was in charge of the *janpada* or the rural area. Each of its four divisions was entrusted to a *Sthanika*, and units of 5 or 10 villages were in charge of *Gopas*. The officers were primarily concerned with the protection of the lives and property of the subjects. The officer of lower rank was required to report to his superior officer if he failed in the tasks assigned to him. Kautilya reports that the officers were individually responsible for protecting peoples' lives, maintaining records of revenues, dues and remissions, and deciding civil and criminal suits at the headquarters of ten, four hundred and eight hundred villages.

According to the *Dharma Sutras*, the headman is appointed by the king. According to Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, the office of headman was hereditary, subject to confirmation by the king. *Jatak* story mentions village assemblies for managing village affairs. Under the rule of the Pandyas and the Cholas, well organised assemblies, with wide powers of self-government, functioned with an executive body or various executive committees. Executive committees were elected by the members according to rules framed by themselves. The assemblies enjoyed a high reputation for integrity and honesty. They enjoyed the King's patronage and managed temple funds. The assemblies "decided disputes, granted lands, founded and maintained hospitals, took charge

of charitable endowments and controlled taxes”

At the time of the Buddha (in the sixth century B.C.), “the village was an autonomous unit of corporate life ministering to its own needs of taxation, education, settlement of disputes and public works.” One finds a lot of change in village life during this period. In Pali texts the *Gamabhojaka* (person who received village revenues by royal charter) appears as a tyrant who fleeced people with arbitrary exactions and sometimes interfered with the autonomous and associate life of the village. People during this period “amused themselves at fairs and carnivals (*Samaja*) where animal-fights, acrobatic and magical feats, dances and dramatic performances were held for entertainment”. Prostitution, drinking and gambling were common vices.”

The accounts given by Megasthenes (about the fourth century B.C.) report the existence of seven castes—Brahmanas or philosophers, cultivators of land, herdsmen, and hunters, artisans and traders, soldiers, spies and councillors (officers of the king). These were in fact vocational groups rather than castes based on heredity. Intercaste marriages were quite common. It seems this was the period—when socio-cultural distinctions arose. However, distinctions in terms of the ruler and the ruled existed earlier in the Indian village. Inter-village ties always existed. The villages had connections with the king and townsman. Both were governed by the king and the officers appointed by him.

The Village Community in Medieval India

The village scene underwent a sea-change in the medieval period. The temple and the village council (*Panchayat*) emerged as the most effective institutions. Medieval Hindu rulers neglected their obligations to their subjects. The people were left with no choice except to search for their own means of improving their lot. The temple and the *panchayat* emerged as the means to a happy, healthy and productive life. The *panchayat* protected people from exploitation by the government. “The temples maintained a good number of employees, patronised scholars, and

served as seminaries of higher knowledge and the fine arts. They also served as bankers and farmers, daily feeding thousands of people, besides carrying on a variety of religious, educational and cultural activities.” Many mosques also served as seminaries and had government patronage. Temples and *panchayats* no doubt filled up the socio-cultural vacuum created by the rulers, but they also created a static culture in India. The economy became stagnant. No new changes, innovations and devices for advancement of society were introduced.

In the early medieval period, the majority of people lived in villages with agriculture as their principal occupation. The agriculturists were required to pay land revenue to the state through different types of intermediaries. The land-man ratio was low, food was plentiful and cheap. Life in the villages was isolated and unprogressive, and extremely simple and unchanging. The village economy was largely self-sufficient. “The village artisans and servants, the priest and the moneylender satisfied all his (the villager’s) requirements. The joint family system afforded him protection; the village *panchayat* gave his minor grievances a just redress.” “The village with its caste *panchayats* and headman was an autonomous unit of the state which carried out its activities unmindful of what happened to the central government.” Thus, medieval India had a different village scene from that of ancient India. The stagnant village economy during the medieval period created several misconceptions about Indian village among the British administrators and ethnographers. We will give a brief account of some of these distorted views.

lage a monolithic, atomistic and unchanging entity. Metcalfe writes: "The village communities are little republics, having nearly everything that they want within themselves and almost independent of any foreign relations." Further, Metcalfe states that wars pass over it, regimes come and go, but the village as a society always emerges 'unchanged, unshaken and self-sufficient'.

The question is: Is this characterisation of a typical Indian village appropriate and true? Several anthropologists and sociologists have vehemently refuted this view. A large number of studies had been carried out in the fifties with the assumption that the Indian village was not 'static', 'isolated', and 'homogeneous', but that it was changing, had connections with wider society, and had social differentiation. Migration, village exogamy, inter-village economic ties (through the *jajmani* system), dependence upon towns for markets, division of labour and visits to religious places have also been basic features of the Indian village, breaking its isolation and separation from its vicinity and the wider world. The *jajmani* system refers to a system of social, cultural and economic ties between different caste groups. Under this system some castes are patrons and others are service-castes. The service castes offer their services to the landowning upper castes and in turn are paid both in cash and kind. These castes are generally under obligation to serve the patron castes and their families. Sometimes, particularly on festivals and auspicious occasions, they also get "gifts" from their *jajmans* (patrons). The *jajmani* system has been weakening due to market forces, contacts with towns, migration, education and social and cultural awareness on the part of the functionary (service) castes. Today, village people are dependent upon towns and cities for the services which earlier they used to get from the functionary castes.

Thus, the village is linked by many ties to other villages, towns and cities. Mandelbaum writes: "A village is not a neatly separable social and conceptual package but it is nonetheless a

fundamental social unit." It is becoming increasing part of the wider society

Village as a Social Unit

The famous French sociologist Louis Dumont refers to three meanings of the term "village community": (1) as a political society, (2) as a body of co-owners of the soil, and (3) as the emblem of traditional economy and polity, "a watchword of Indian patriotism". Thus, according to this view, the village community in India has been a part of India's polity and economy. "A village is far more than a locale, more than just a collection of houses, lanes and fields" These reactions have come up because of an exaggerated notion of the independence of Indian villages. The village exists even today as a cohesive territorial unit. However, village identity, solidarity and loyalty cut across caste and community. There are factions and feuding groups within villages and between villages. Land reforms, Panchayati Raj, Sanskritisation and other structural and cultural changes have brought about significant changes within its social structure and in its relations with the wider world. Mandelbaum observes: "A village is clearly an important and viable social entity to its people, who also take part in the larger society and share in the pattern of the civilisation." In some cases, the village may be isolated for the purpose of studies, in others it is not. Therefore, the village needs to be studied in its local milieu as well as in a wider perspective.

The British themselves created a new pattern of social differentiation by introducing zamindari and raiyatwari systems of land tenure. The zamindars were generally upper caste men who were assigned the task of collecting revenue from village people on behalf of the British government. They received commission for this assignment. Their status was not the same as they were assigned this task on different scales. The Ryots were peasant-proprietors who were granted 'occupancy' rights by the government after they had paid a certain amount of money for getting this right. They were not subjected to the control of

green revolution is defined in terms of tangible changes in the agricultural sector, brought about through the adoption of new technology, seeds, fertilisers, etc.) They have also become politically stronger due to their larger members. The lower castes have also come closer to other sections of people in the village community. Untouchability is not a rigid institution as it used to be about 50 years ago. They have become conscious of their position in independent India. A large number of people from these groups have migrated to towns and cities for better employment. Despite these changes in the village's social structure and economy, the village remains somewhat different from towns and cities in its ethos, way of life and interpersonal relations. In fact, the village represents a structural pattern different to that of towns.

Urban Life in India

At least two trends are clear: (1) dependence upon agriculture for livelihood has steadily decreased; and (2) population of towns and cities has increased over the years. Both the trends indicate an increase in the processes of industrialisation and urbanisation. Towns and cities offer jobs and better amenities, whereas people in villages live a hard life. Due to urbanisation, traditional bonds based on religion, caste and family have weakened in the villages. Anonymity, as found in towns, is absent in rural areas. City life creates a personality of its own, different from the one which is the product of rural life.

Structure of Towns and Cities

A city is defined as a place having a population of 100,000 or more. Places with a population of 5,000 and more are classified as towns. Three conditions for a place being classified as a town are: (1) the population is more than 5,000; (2) the density is not less than 400 per sq. km, and (3) not less than 75 per cent of the adult male population is engaged in non-agricultural activities.

The ratio of rural population to urban has not changed drastically since 1901; but there is a trend towards its slow decline. Today, cities are

overcrowded. They contain many more people than the number for whom they can comfortably provide civic amenities. Cities which are state's capitals have become over-burdened. The cities of Delhi, Bangalore and Jaipur have shown rapid increase in their populations over the past two decades. All towns and cities do not have a uniform pattern of population growth and development.

In 1981, there were 216 cities of one lakh population or more ("Class I"), containing 94 million people. Of these, 27 per cent lived in 12 big cities (with one million or more people). Of these 12, seven grew by less than 48 per cent in the decade upto 1981. Of the other five, two had just 48 per cent growth, two were between 55 and 65 per cent and only one, Bangalore, grew very fast. The unevenness in the growth can be seen in terms of some more data. Eight cities grew more slowly than the urban population as a whole, and 9, at less than the rate of increase for all class I cities. Delhi and Bangalore exhibited rapid growth. Of the three cities which crossed the one million mark, Jaipur grew slightly faster than class I cities, Nagpur slightly slower, and Lucknow at below the rate of natural increase for India.

There were 50 cities (Class I) that grew very rapidly in the decade 1971 to 1981. Only 3 were big cities, and 38 had under half a million population each. One view is that rural exodus has not contributed to population growth in cities as much as it has been thought. Cities in India have grown much less fast than cities in America. America has one-third of India's population, and of this, 166 million live in 290 Class I cities, and 55 per cent of them live in 38 big cities. Thus, India's urbanisation is actually taking place at a very slow rate. Urban growth is mainly due to natural growth of cities; and there we find real cause of unevenness.

Urban centres is divided into six categories on the basis of size. These are: (1) 1,00,000 and above, (2) 50,000–1,00,000, (3) 20,000–50,000, (4) 10,000–20,000, (5) 5,000–10,000, and (6) less than 5,000. Besides these, there are metropolitan cities like Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay, Madras,

Percentage share of population held by nine largest Class I cities in 1971 and 1981.

City	1971 (%)	1981 (%)
Calcutta	11.6	9.8
Greater Bombay	10.0	8.8
Delhi	6.1	6.1
Madras	5.3	4.6
Bangalore	2.8	3.1
Hyderabad	3.0	2.7
Ahmedabad	2.9	2.7
Kanpur	2.1	1.8
Pune	1.9	1.8

Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Kanpur. The number of Class V and VI towns has shown a marked decline after independence. Industrial towns have come up in all the states, particularly in the states of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa.

Towns and cities are not an offshoot of industrialisation in India. The Indus Valley civilisation was basically a civilisation of towns. In pre-industrial India, there were pilgrim-centres, capital-towns, centres of trade and commerce and towns having universities and facilities for academic activities. Varanasi, Allahabad, Tirupati, Amritsar, Ajmer, Haridwar, Delhi, Agra, Hyderabad, Poona, Dacca, Nalanda and Taxila were well-known towns before the dawn of industrialisation. The pilgrim-towns also tend to have today become centres of trade and commerce. The capital-towns housed the army, police, bureaucracy and intelligentsia. They also attracted artists, singers, musicians and scholars. With the coming of the British, port-towns became important centres of trade and commerce, but later on the same towns, namely, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras also became places of higher education and centres of the legal profession. The pre-industrial towns have grown very large, disproportionate to their capacities and available infrastructural resources.

economic development and social change. Urbanisation also means, according to one view, "a breakdown of traditional social institutions and values". However, in India, one cannot say that urbanisation has resulted in the caste system being transformed into the class system, the joint-family transforming into the nuclear family, and in religion becoming secularised. M.S.A. Rao observes that the "breakdown" hypothesis originated from the western experience, and it ignores the fact of "traditional urbanisation" in India. "Modern urbanisation" is different from the traditional urbanisation.

Urban centres in traditional India were important places of worship, annual congregations, trade and navigation. They had a stable population. Today, cities have come up as places of industry, headquarters of districts and states or as centres of higher education. A city has a highly diversified population. Chandigarh, Gandhinagar, Bokaro, Bhilai and Sindh are examples of new towns and cities. Some towns have lost their traditional significance, whereas some have acquired added importance because of economic and political factors.

The city is a mirror of civilisation. Robert Redfield has provided a typology of the city in terms of orthogenetic and heterogenetic processes of change in the organisation of tradition and culture. Milton Singer observes that the great tradition is basically an urban phenomenon, and transformation of the little tradition into the great tradition refers to the process of urbanisation. However, the great tradition has also been undergoing significant change; hence individualism, freedom and fluidity in traditional norms and values.

Gideon Sjoberg distinguishes cities into: (1) pre-industrial, and (2) industrial. The pre-industrial city was a feudal one. There are two limitations to this approach: (1) feudalism was not the only basis of city-formation, and (2) today the modern city is found in existence due to other factors too, in addition to industrialisation. Even some very important towns and cities are devoid of the industrialisation which one finds in Bokaro, Bhillai, Jamshedpur, Ranchi, Faridabad, Ahmedabad, Bombay and Poona.

Urbanisation in India

The following points have been made about the nature of urbanisation in India: (1) whether the nature of urbanisation is co-terminus with westernisation? (2) can a valid distinction be made between villages and cities?; (3) urbanisation is seen in relation to social change, hence urbanisation is not an independent variable of social change; and (4) urbanisation has brought new forms of social organisation and association.

Since caste, joint-family and folk-culture continue to exist in India's towns and cities, urbanisation is not co-terminus with westernisation. In the pre-westernisation period there were urban centres in India, and people flocked to them from different parts of the country. There is a valid distinction between village and city in terms of two different ethos of life, cultural patterns, socio-cultural groupings and modes of earning a livelihood. However, there are also structural similarities between the two in

regard to patterns of caste, kinship, rules of marriage and observance of religious practices. Migration, educational institutions, employment opportunities and administration are other institutional sources of linkages between villages and cities.

Thus, villages and towns cannot be seen simply as dichotomous entities. They are interlinked and yet distinct from each other. It is a fact that urbanisation itself is a result of advancement in science and technology and of other factors. But once urbanisation becomes a fact in itself, it brings about several other situations and problems such as formal associations and institutions, organised means of transport and communication, slums, overcrowding and crime. In fact, urbanisation is a dependent variable initially, but it tends to become a causative factor subsequently. There is a sort of "circular causation" in the process of urbanisation.

An operational definition of urbanisation is given by G.S. Ghurye. Urbanisation means migration of people from village to city and the effect of this movement upon the migrants and their families and upon fellowmen in the villages. D.F. Pocock's observation seems to be quite refreshing. He writes: "...the Indian city, old or modern, is Indian just as an American city is American. Nothing is gained by imagining that the word 'city' automatically implies certain comparable features". Thus, the Indian urban situation needs to be explored in its specific context and historicity. R.K. Mukherjee rejects the notion of dichotomy between rural and urban, and also the view that urbanisation is an independent variable. He refers to the notion of "degree of urbanisation" as a useful conceptual tool for understanding rural-urban relations. Hence, he also prefers the concept of "rural-urban continuum".

The concept of urbanisation needs to be distinguished from the concepts of urbanity and urbanism. Urbanisation refers to the process of change in values, attitudes and styles of life of those people who migrate to cities from villages, and the impact of these people on those who are

left behind in the villages. Urbanity is a state of people living in urban areas distinct from those living in the countryside. Urbanity refers to a pattern of life in terms of work situation, food habits, stress pattern and world view of the people living in urban centres. Urbanism can be characterised as a system of values, norms and attitudes towards interpersonal relations in terms of formalism, individualism and anonymity.

Urban Social Structure and Stratification

A number of criteria have been used to understand urban social structure and stratification. The most important ones are the extent of closure or openness and the nature of deprivations and gratifications. These apply to specific groups and collectivities as some of them have opportunities for betterment of their social standing whereas others remain deprived of the same. The individual is the basis, in regard to motivational structure, utilisation of available opportunities and the use of means of communication for realising one's aspirations. Thus, theoretically speaking, urban social structure can be characterised in terms of having openness, attributional criteria (occupation, education, income, etc.), mobility and individual ranking.

Victor S. D'Souza has analysed kinship, caste, class, religion and displaced or non-placed conditions in his study of the city of Chandigarh. Internal differentiation among different groupings has been analysed on the basis of education, occupational prestige and income. The assumption is that if the groupings of a particular type are alike in respect of education, occupation and income, then the principle on which they are formed is not an important basis of social organisation. For it to be called important, the members of each grouping should tend to be homogenous and the different groupings should be heterogenous.

D'Souza finds that the educational, occupational and income hierarchies are significantly correlated with each other. However, the correlation of each of them with the operational caste hierarchy is not significant.

Social class position (occupational status) is positively correlated with education and family income. For the Chandigarh people, social status is a fundamental value, which is based on education, occupational prestige and family income.

D'Souza writes: "A social class may be defined as a category of persons having more or less equal prestige or social status." D'Souza considers occupational prestige the most reliable indicator of class position. He has also taken into account self-identification by different categories of respondents. The objective criteria have a correlation with the subjective class identification. The main classes are: (1) upper class, (2) middle class, (3) working class, and (4) lower class. D'Souza also identifies seven occupational grades which are differentially associated with different classes, depending upon the ranks of individuals within these grades.

Cities consist of a variety of professional classes. They perform specialised functions, such as teaching, medical, legal, etc. A study of the social origins of professionals may offer significant insights into the process of social stratification and mobility. Compared to other Asian countries, the professional classes in India constitute a very small proportion of all workers. For every 10,000 workers in India, there are 171 professional workers. In Japan the figure is 489, in China 319, in Sri Lanka 446, in Malaysia 314 and 294 in the Philippines. Unevenness in the growth of professions comes to light clearly. It is revealed that the recruitment to professions is heavily in favour of the upper caste and urban people.

and engineering professions. About 70 per cent of the employees in registered factories live in urban areas. The mass of ministerial staff also live in towns and cities.

The social structure of towns and cities is comprised of (1) top level businessmen, industrialists and bureaucrats, (2) higher income professionals, scientists, technicians, professional managers in industry and large merchants, (3) clerks and minor officials in government offices and private firms, school teachers, working journalists, struggling professionals, petty shopkeepers and small-scale entrepreneurs, and (4) members of the working class, such as operators, artisans, household industry workers, service-workers, hawkers, peddlers, construction workers and unskilled labourers.

We may conclude our discussion on urban life by saying that urbanisation refers to the movement of people from rural to urban areas. The rate of urbanisation during the twentieth century has been more rapid than in the past. There has been an uneven degree of urbanisation and urban growth. This has had serious repercussions on the socio-economic development of India in general and of specific regions in particular. The location of towns in a given region becomes an important factor in the economic development of the area. Along with spacing, the size of a city also assumes importance. Both hierarchy (size) and location of towns determine, to a large extent, the nature of the rural-urban interaction, including migration, supply of goods to urban markets and purchase of consumer goods from cities. In this section we have discussed distinctions between rural and urban communities, the nature and process of urbanisation and urban social structure, with special reference to its class composition.

Conclusion

We have analysed the structure of villages and urban communities in India. Our analysis of the village community focuses on the nature of village life in ancient, medieval and modern India. The Indian village has been a very vital part of social

life. It was a system, not only of social and cultural ties, but also of economic and administrative functions. British ethnographers and administrators characterised the Indian village community as a "little republic", a society unchanged and self-sufficient. However, we have found that it was changing, and had ties with wider society and with other villages and towns. The jajmani system was a mechanism through which various caste groups interacted with each other. Migration, village exogamy, the jajmani system, dependence upon towns for a market, division of labour and visits to religious places speak of the fact that the Indian village was not an isolated whole. The British themselves created several new patterns of social and economic relations by introducing the zamindari and raiyatwari systems of land tenure. With the abolishing of these systems and with initiation of several new plans and programmes, we witness new social relations in post-Independence India. However, in spite of these changes, the village community in India has an ethos of social life, different from that of towns and cities. There are some aspects of village social life which have not changed much.

Urbanisation is a world-wide phenomenon. India has also witnessed an increased growth of urbanisation and industrialisation in the post-Independence period. Urban growth in India is particularly due to large-scale migration from villages to towns and cities, as the latter offer better facilities for education and training and more and better avenues for employment. Besides structure and composition of towns and cities, we have discussed the concept of urbanisation, urbanisation in India, and urban social structure and stratification. Our main focus has been on understanding the causes of uneven urban growth. Towns and cities are an important factor in the development of the region in which they are located. The development of towns and cities depends upon the support villages in the vicinity extend to them in terms of migration, supply of farm produce to the cities, and purchase of consumer goods from them.

EXERCISES

1. Give a brief account of village community life in ancient India.
2. How was village social life different in medieval India as compared to that in ancient India?
3. Write short notes on the following:
 - i. Kautilya
 - ii. Megasthenes
 - iii. Metcalfe
4. Explain the Jajmani system. Describe the factors which have weakened this system.
5. Is the village an "isolable" unit?
6. In what way has the caste system been a major social institution in the Indian village community.
7. Explain the zamindari and raiyatwari systems of land tenure.
8. Discuss the following:
 - i. Joint-family
 - ii. Rules of marriage
 - iii. Caste panchayats
 - iv. Caste dominance
 - v. Untouchability
9. Differentiate between the city and the village.
10. Describe the features of the following types of towns:
 - i. Pilgrim-centres
 - ii. Capital towns
 - iii. Centres of trade and commerce
 - iv. Towns having universities and institutions of academic learning.
 - v. Industrial towns
10. Define urbanisation. Distinguish it from urbanism and urbanity.
11. Explain the following:
 - i. Industrialisation
 - ii. Westernisation
 - iii. Rural-urban continuum
 - iv. Social class
12. Describe the urban social structure. Bring out class-based distinctions in urban India.
13. Explain the role of the professional classes in urban India.

Chapter VII

The Caste System

Introduction

Caste is known as *jati* in common parlance. Caste as a system of social relations has been a central point in Hindu society for several centuries. A lot of conjectures, controversies and explanations have come up about its origin, nature and role in Indian society. It has been claimed that it is an all-encompassing system, an ideology which would govern all other relations. Its central notion is hierarchy based on the ideas of pollution and purity. This chapter gives a brief account of the caste system, its evolution, role and significance in contemporary India.

The Caste System in the Ancient Period

A caste is an endogamous group; that is its members marry within the caste. A man is born in a caste and remains in that for ever. Members of a caste used to have a particular occupation on a hereditary basis. A given caste occupies a particular rank in the hierarchy of castes, hence some are superior to it and some are inferior. At the top are Brahmins and at the bottom are the "untouchable castes". There are certain rules regarding eating, drinking and social interaction which are to be followed by all castes. Caste Panchayats used to regulate the behaviour of its members by implementing these rules. Caste is a dynamic institution; it has changed a great deal in accordance with changes in the wider society. In this chapter we will discuss problems related to its definition, caste dynamics, caste as an ideology, caste and class, and changes in the caste system.

The Vedic Period

The origin of the caste system dates back to the

age of the Rig-Veda. There is a reference to the word *varna* (colour) in the Rig-Veda. *Arya* is referred to as fair and *Dasa* as dark. However, there is no reference to Brahmana or Kshatriya. People of the two *varnas* (fair and dark complexioned) differed not only in their skin colour but also in their worship and speech. Thus, the differences were both racial and cultural. Brahmanas, Rajanyas (Kshatriyas) and Vaishyas constituted the Arya Varna and the non-Aryans made up the Dasa Varna.

The Purusha-sukta, a part of the Rig-Veda, states that the Brahmanas, Rajanyas, Vaishyas and Sudras sprang from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet of the *Purusa* (God). Later on, these became castes. However, there is no reference to the classes becoming hereditary. Classes were merely functional. The priest and the warrior occupied positions above the Vaishya and the Shudra, but they were not hereditary positions nor exclusive ones. There was interchange of duties and also inter-class marriage. The ban on eating food cooked by Shudras did not exist. There was no trace of untouchability.

The Later Vedic Civilisation

Later Vedic civilisation consists of Samhitas—Atharva, Yaju and Sama and the Brahmanas and Sutras. The notion of sacrifice gained prominence in this period. The doctrines of Karma, Maya, transmigration, identity of the individual soul with the Universal Soul, and Mukti as main tenets of Hinduism, find their first expression in the Upanishads. The performers of Yajnas came to be known as Brahmanas. They became a distinct class and were highly respected because they

performed religious duties. The Aryans who moved to the east and south had to fight with the original inhabitants, and they formed another group known as the Kshatriyas. They were required to protect the conquered territories. The remaining Aryans became a separate class and were named Vaishyas. The non-Aryans became the fourth class and were known as Shudras. Initially these classes were not rigid divisions; but gradually restrictions were imposed on change of duties. Further sub-divisions occurred. Birth became the sole criterion of class (caste) determination. These four groups were varnas and not castes. Today, castes are identified as endogamous groups, locally known as jatis, and they number more than three thousand in India. Brahmin, for example, is not one single caste. In fact, there are hundreds of castes and sub-castes among Brahmins. So is the case with Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. As Varnas, Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas are only one each in the entire country.

The power and privilege of the priestly caste (Brahmanas) increased, but the Kshatriyas challenged this from time to time. In course of time these two castes—Brahmanas and Kshatriyas enjoyed special privileges, and Vaishyas and Shudras were denied these. A system of nomenclature to address the members of these castes emerged. Occupational differentiation also became a necessity, with sub-divisions within these four caste groups. "Change of caste, though very unusual, was not as yet impossible." The higher castes could marry into the lower castes; but marriage with Shudras was not approved. Shudras were denied the right to perform sacrifices. The idea of pollution by touch found expression. Inter-dining was still allowed. The caste system was not yet rigid.

The four *Ashramas*, namely *Brahmacharya*, *Grhastha*, *Vanprastha* and *Sannyasa* (the student, householder, forest hermit, and

supremacy of Brahmanas and Kshatriyas. Instances of marriages between these two are also reported. A reference is also found to *Saptavarṇas* (seven castes), signifying differentiation (particularly sub-divisions) among the Vaishyas.

The Smriti Period

Dharma, or a code of duties for the harmonious functioning of the various divisions of society, became an accepted procedure. "Dharma Shashtra or Smritis laid down rules for every caste and vocation, for every relation in society, king and subjects, husband and wife, teacher and pupil. The rules were not rigid and were revised from time to time to meet new developments. Sometimes the law-givers and the priestly class introduced their own ideas and laid down strictures and taboos." However, from the time of the Imperial Guptas, the castes and sub-castes were rigidly separated. Inter-caste relations were defined in regard to dining, marriage, touch and ritual observance. The category of "outcastes" had emerged. Women faced degradation. The corporate bodies like *gana* (oligarchic states), *shreni* (craft guilds) and *sangha* (monastic orders), which were formed in the early Vedic period, disintegrated. India became an insular and stagnant society. Women did not enjoy social status equal to men. Widow remarriage was not permitted, the right to property was denied to women, and the institution of sati was encouraged.

time when caste rank was not necessarily determined by birth. A functional view of the caste system refers to advantages and merits which society derived from the distribution of work and duties to various groups known initially as *varnas* and later on as *castes* and *sub-castes*.

Inflexibility in the Caste System

The caste system became inflexible when birth became the basis of caste rank. Restrictions on marriage and social relations were also imposed. The codes of Gautama, Bodhayana and Apastamba have references regarding heredity, *connubiality and commensality in the context of the caste system*. Thus, the four *varnas* were separated from and related to each other by a set of laws based on two cardinal principles: division of labour and synthesis. A number of sub-castes and mixed castes emerged with the rise of new crafts and vocations. Thus, with increased occupational differentiation, the caste system became more diversified. Intercaste marriage, abduction, and rape contributed to the weakening of the monolithic nature of the caste system. The *Smritis* such as Manu, Vishnu, Yajnavalkya, Brahaspati and Narada report cases of "castes mix" and numerous violations of *Shastric* canons and injunctions.

Economic distinctions did not necessarily coincide with caste distinctions. The economic pyramid consisted of four layers. At the top came the high officials, merchants, bankers and landlords (*Amatya*, *Shastri* and *Gramabhojaka*). Below them came small freeholders, artisans and ordinary officials. Next was labour without right and property, and at the bottom was despised and segregated labour. The third and the fourth classes coincided with the *Shudras* and the *Malechha*, respectively. The first and the second classes would not fit into the caste hierarchy. The *Brahmanas* and the *Kshatriyas* who were faithful to their callings enjoyed high esteem and influence, even if they were not well-off economically.

Thus, the *varnas* (castes) were not mere economic classes. When a *Brahmana* or a *Kshatriya* adopted trade and commerce, he still retained his precedence over the *Vaishya*. Caste also overlapped with class as we see particularly in the case of the *Vaishyas* and the *Shudras*. One view is that property and privilege were separate. *Brahmanas* enjoyed privilege. The *Vaishya* had property but was treated as a commoner. The *Shudras* were allowed the *Vaishya* callings of agriculture, crafts and trade, but were not allowed the privileges of Vedic studies and *Upanayana* (regeneration). A functional view and the dynamic and adaptive nature of caste system can be seen in the following statement: "The caste system was devised to solve the differences in society, to reduce competition and to maintain a balance of interests. It was from time to time adjusted to new developments." Thus, upto the *Smriti* period caste was projected as a positive and useful system of social relations.

The Aryan society, as a result of the glorified functionality of the caste system, became static and immobile. Buddhism attacked the organic character of the caste system, but the *Brahmanas* tried to retain the same. *Varnashrama Dharma* (division of society into the four *varnas* mentioned earlier) accompanied by *Ashramas* (four *ashramas* also mentioned earlier) were accepted as instruments of retaining socio-cultural distinctions and division of labour. The organic character of the system refers to interdependence of different caste groups upon each other, as we find in the interdependence of different parts of the human body.

The Caste System in the Medieval Period

Class or occupational distinctions crystallised in the early phase of the medieval period. Artisans, servants, priests and money-lenders were the main groups. The caste panchayats had become very strong instruments for regulating the behaviour of its members. The Turks placed a premium on high lineage in matters of appointment. The nobles and officers were graded into

Khans, Maliks, Amirs, Sipah-salars and Sar-Khails, according to their military status. There was a class of slaves.

The Turkish rulers had a preference for luxurious, city life. The lower classes of Muslims mainly consisted of converts from Hinduism. They retained a Hindu identity even after conversion to Islam. They continued to work as artisans, shopkeepers and clerks. Many worked as workers and slaves in the royal palace and in the households of the nobles and the rich. In social matters, they were treated as inferiors by the ruling group.

The Mughal rule did not adversely affect the socio-cultural aspects of the caste system. "The Brahmins looked after the temples, directed religious ceremonies, worked as teachers, administered Hindu personal laws and served the Hindu society in various other ways." The Kshatriyas were rajas, rais and zamindars, although they lost a large part of their dominion in the north. They were a warlike people. They fought against the foreign invaders to protect their interests, position and prestige. The Vaisnyas were quite prosperous, as they were engaged in banking, commerce, transport and crafts. They generally served the royal families and the rich. The plight of the Shudras was the same as before because they continued to suffer from social disabilities.

Numerous castes, sub-castes and sub-sub-castes arose, based on occupational and regional differences. The Kayasthas came into the limelight as government servants, and continued to be so until India became independent. The Khattris proved to be successful financiers and administrators. The Nagars, the Brahmins and the Chettiars became influential as they performed administrative and financial responsibilities. However, the Bhakti movement, by recognising spiritual equality of all persons, reduced the rigidity of the caste-system in day-to-day social relations.

The caste system is known for its adaptive capacity. It has adapted to innumerable difficult situations, forces and pressures. I have written

elsewhere: "Because of its (caste) adaptability, caste has evolved simultaneously in several directions and adjusted with ideologically antagonistic systems, adjusting its principles whenever necessary. It has never paved the way to the emergence of an alternate system of stratification and social relations, though the contents of its functions and other paraphernalia changed from time to time."

Caste in the British Period

The various views on caste are based either on impressionistic understanding or on the scriptural texts which we referred to earlier. Lines of distinction between varna and caste, and caste and class have not been clearly drawn. Extreme views have been expressed about the caste system. One is that caste is an undesirable and harmful institution because it serves the interests of the entrenched and dominant caste groups. Contrary to this is the view that caste is a functional institution, as it ensures division of labour, orderliness and regulation of behaviour of its members through endogamy and caste panchayats. The caste system has also been considered as a coercive system. It compels members of a caste to follow certain rules of marriage and inter-personal relations. The freedom of the individual is curtailed by the corporate strength of the caste system. Due to these divergent views, it is difficult to arrive at a precise definition of caste.

castes and many more clans and sub-clans within these castes is a proof of diversification, differentiation and change in the caste system. Inter-caste or mixed marriages, migration, change in occupations, the Buddhist movement, the impact of Islam, the impact of the British, and several other factors have made caste not only an adaptive but also a living system of social relations.

A number of books written, particularly in the pre-Independence period, refer to the advantages and disadvantages of the caste system. The advantages are: division of labour, measures of protection, cleanliness, respect for authority and moral restraint. The disadvantages are: physical degeneracy, national poverty, hinderance to intellectual progress, hostility to social reform, curbs on individual liberty, hinderance to the growth of nationality, discord between classes, human suffering, exploitation and cruelty, the pride and arrogance of the Brahmins, moral degradation and blasphemous falsehood, etc. Caste was and is considered to be a tyrannical system. For the Brahmins, the caste system itself became a religion under the pretext of maintaining the unity and wholesomeness of Hindu society.

The British Raj encouraged the continuity of the caste system by favouring some caste groups with higher status, and by granting them titles and land. The system was basically inegalitarian, and the British never discouraged caste-based inequalities, injustices and discriminations. On the contrary, British administrators and ethnographers defined caste in terms of its "functionality" to society and culture in India. They have emphasised inter-caste and intra-caste harmony and discipline with the implicit objective of keeping people divided into castes and sub-castes so that they did not unite against British colonial rule in India.

Defining the Caste System

According to some scholars, the main features of castes are: (1) a common name, (2) a common descent, (3) professing the same hereditary call-

ing, and (4) forming a single homogeneous community. Ketkar considers hereditary membership and endogamy as the basis of caste, as an organic structure of relations. The organic nature of caste refers to harmony of relations between different caste groups. Senart writes: "A caste system is one whereby a society is divided up into a number of self-contained and completely segregated units (castes), the mutual relations between them are ritually determined in a graded scale."

Hutton takes a functional view of the caste system. He speaks of three types of functions of the caste system: (1) functions for individual members, (2) community functions, and (3) functions for the state, for society as a whole. G.S. Ghurye gives a comprehensive definition of caste. According to him the six main features of the caste system are: (1) segmental division of society, (2) hierarchy of groups, (3) restrictions of feeding and social intercourse, (4) allied and religious disabilities and privileges of the different sections, (5) lack of the unrestricted choice of occupation, and (6) restrictions on marriage. Endogamy is the stable feature of the caste system. However, in recent years, inter-caste and inter-religious marriages have been taking place, particularly in towns and cities.

Several other views on caste are: (1) Karl Marx's belief that the Asiatic mode of production was related to the stability of the caste system in India. (2) H.J.S. Maine's view of caste as an example of a non-contractual "status-society" (3) Senart's focus on the purity of descent and purity of occupations. (4) Louis Dumont's view of pollution-purity as the ideological basis of Hindu society reflected through the caste system. (5) Hocart's belief that the performance of certain rituals and ritual services to the deity and the feudal lords was the basis of the caste system. (6) Max Weber's view that caste is based on the otherworldly doctrines of Hinduism. (7) Bougle's view of the caste system in terms of hereditary specialisation, hierarchy and mutual repulsion (social distance).

Caste as an All-Encompassing System

Caste has been treated as a comprehensive

system of social relations. One could even say that it has been equated with the Hindu society itself. Surjit Sinha, in a trend report prepared for the Indian Council of Social Science Research, lists the studies on caste as follows: village studies, caste and politics; caste, economic organisation and economic development; caste and land tenure; caste, class and social inequality; specialised study of caste ranking; social mobility in the caste system; social structure of caste; caste and the changing legal system; demography of caste; caste in the urban setting; caste among the non-Hindus in India and Pakistan; study of caste across civilisations; caste and the Indian civilization; tribe-caste continuum; caste and personality structure; and, caste and social dialect. Further, Sinha lists the following trends in the studies of the caste system:

- (1) Speculative theories about the origin of the caste system have been given up. The fact of the matter is that today we do not talk of origin, but refer to levels of its evolution in the Indian society.
- (2) The bulk of the work on caste is done by the methods of social anthropology and sociology, on the basis of a study of multi-caste villages.
- (3) In these studies, considerable interest is shown in understanding the adaptability of the caste system to new situations and forces of change.
- (4) The study of inter-ethnic status ranking is done through analysis of data.
- (5) The study of social mobility in the caste system of both structural (vertical) and positional (horizontal) changes has been taken up.
- (6) The concept of hierarchy based on the "binary opposition" of purity-pollution has received considerable attention. Binary opposition refers to Dumont's view that everything in the caste system can be seen in terms of pure and impure. The pure encompasses the impure. In other words, "pure" is higher and superior and "impure" is lower and inferior. They are

as such oppose to each other; but at the same time the "pure" is found in the "impure" and vice-versa, as they are parts of the same value system.

- (7) Inter-regional comparisons within India and comparisons of castes beyond the Indian civilisation have also been done.

In addition to these points, there is a need to reflect upon caste and class polarity, the caste, class and power approach to social stratification and whether caste is a cultural aspect or a structural phenomenon in Indian society. In fact, what we need to do is to examine the theory or ideology of the caste system, the structure of caste groups and processes of change affecting the caste structure.

Caste, Varna and Class

Varna is an all-India frame by which Hindu society is supposedly divided into four categories, namely, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. Caste, as a system, is an all-India phenomenon; but specific caste groups are found as local or sub-regional entities. A given village or a number of villages in a given area consist of several caste groups (Jatis). It is this group which becomes an effective interactional entity, a localised phenomenon, a source of strength or a basis for formation of factions in a given village. Such Jatis living in a village or town observe communal and connubial rules in social intercourse.

the economic distinctions among members of a given caste in a village. While observing rules of marriage, members of various castes may place a premium on class or status considerations in matrimonial alliances.

Caste as an Ideology

Louis Dumont considers the inequality of the caste system a special type of inequality. "Ideas and values" are basic for knowing actual and observable behaviour of people. For Dumont the idea of pure and impure is basic to caste hierarchy. Hierarchy is a "universal necessity". Society in India, according to Dumont, has remained static. Change has occurred in society, but change of society is absent. Caste, as an empirical reality, can be located in the form of Jatis in a specific rural/urban context. Caste is seen as a specific status group in these contexts. However, caste is also a means of identity at a macro-level. At the macro-level it is not a functioning reality of informal, day-to-day relations. Caste does not become, at this broad level, a basis of marriage, for example, between a Tamil Brahmin and Kanya Kubja Brahmin from Uttar Pradesh. However, a Tamil and a Kanya Kubja Brahmin may both have a sense of belonging to the same social stock, and even cooperate for common good particularly in situations of crisis.

Another question is: Is caste an interest group? Caste is certainly a "resource" in psychological as well as social terms. However, this quality varies from caste to caste depending upon the status of a given caste in a given region or sub-region. Members of a caste articulate their concerns at various levels in the form of interests—economic, social and political.

"Caste Model" of Indian Society

Louis Dumont thinks of Indian society as a "caste society". As such caste is thought to be a logical opposite of the class system. Andre Beteille outlines the main features of the "caste model" of Indian society as follows:

(1) It is based primarily on the ideas held or

expressed by certain sections of society and not on the observed behaviour of people. There is always a difference between the "ideal" and the "actual".

- (2) It attaches a sort of primary and universal significance to caste as this has been conceived in the scriptural texts; but the fact is that caste has changed a lot and acquired new dimensions and roles to perform in the changed situations.
- (3) The entire system is viewed as being governed by certain more or less explicitly formulated principles or "rules of the game"
- (4) Different castes are seen as fulfilling complementary functions and their mutual relations as being "non-antagonistic". The reference here is to the jajmani system; that is, performance of functions assigned to the members of different caste groups on hereditary basis.

Beteille is of the view that this model, as a general scheme, does not tell much about specific properties of any society. Secondly, the model in its specific form does not take into account certain crucial features of economic and political life. Thus, the model is essentially concerned with ideas and values, hence useful in the interpretation of systems of religious beliefs. The "caste model" leaves the study of interests, political and economic problems, and inter-group relations incomplete. Acceptance of this model limits the understanding of caste as a cultural system.

The structural aspect of caste does not receive due attention when caste is seen as a cultural or ideological system. Relations between upper and lower castes, between the landowning and the landless castes, between the Jajman and the Kamin castes, etc. would demand a study of caste from the structural point of view. Domination/subjugation, surplus/exploitation, privileges/deprivations, for example, become the points of reference in the structural perspective. The cultural perspective, however, puts emphasis on ideas and values, namely, pollution-purity, rules

upper castes have been a part of the historicity of the caste system itself.

Caste among the Non-Hindus

It has been stated that caste is an exclusively Hindu institution; but there are studies which have found castes among Muslims, Sikhs and Christians. The Census Commissioners of the pre-Independence era reported the existence of caste-like endogamous strata among non-Hindus in India. Among the Muslims of Calcutta and Uttar Pradesh and among the Sikhs, Jains and Jews, the modes of socio-economic relationship are patterned on caste system. These communities have hereditary occupational groups as endogamous ranked sub-groups. A number of lower caste Hindus converted to Islam in the hope that they would improve their status as Islam did not approve of caste-like distinctions. However, they were not successful in improving their status. Muslims in India are divided into groups closely parallel to the caste system. Also, notions of pollution and untouchability are found among Muslims, despite the fact that Islam rejects these.

Muslims in India are distinguished as Ashrafs and non-Ashrafs. The Ashrafs are believed to be of superior origin and live mainly in towns, whereas the non-Ashrafs are supposedly converts from Hinduism and live mainly in villages. There are also ritual distinctions among the Muslims based on occupation—sweepers, Kamins, landowners, barbers, washermen and artisans of various kinds. Functional castes with some degree of pollution and untouchability are found among the Sikhs and other communities.

Caste groups are found even in Sri Lanka, where Buddhism has been the religion of the Sinhalese people. Examples of similar caste systems are reported from Burma, Japan and some other countries. The blacks of the United States of America have been compared with the "untouchables" of India. However, the way in which caste has become an ideology pervading the entire Hindu society is not found elsewhere. It is a culturally specific and unique system.

Are Castes the Opposite of Classes?

Caste and class are polar opposites, as understood by the western scholars and in particular by the British administrators and ethnographers. They observe that caste and class are different forms of social stratification. The units ranked in the class system are individuals; and those ranked in the caste system are groups. According to this view, change is taking place from caste to class, hierarchy to stratification, closed to open, and from an organic to segmentary system. Such a distinction between caste and class is of a mechanical sort.

A narrow view of class is taken by considering it a result of objective rating of positions based on certain attributes. To think of class as a case of fluidity and of caste as a case of rigidity is too simplistic and unrealistic a depiction of these two systems of social stratification. Acceptance of such a distinction would obviously mean defining caste through the concepts of status rigidity and immutability, organic solidarity, functional inter-dependence, homo-hierarchicus and pollution-purity. Class is described by the ideology of individualism, competition and equality. Such constructs of caste and class are grossly erroneous.

Caste as a system of social stratification represents a semblance of both rigidity and fluidity, cooperation and competition, holism and individualism, organic and segmentary divisions, interdependence and autonomy, and inequality and equality. The genesis of these polar characteristics lies in the notion of superiority of the non-caste western society. These distinctions between caste and class are analytic rather than being based on historic and experiential contents.

The distinction that caste is a real phenomenon and class is a category, an attributional construction, is untenable. Both caste and class are real and empiric. Both are interactional and hierarchical, and incorporate each other. Another fallacy is that class has only the Marxian meaning for the Indian society. What about

unity and harmony among the patrons and clients, landlords and tenants, the upper caste "haves" and the lower-caste "have-nots"? At the same time these polarities refer to contradictions and resultant conflicts between the powerful and the weaker ones. Power is not a zero-sum reality in the Indian context. There are people who are not just at the top and the bottom. It is a multi-layered and intricate social formation. Thus, caste does not have an air of finality and completeness. It has been dynamic and full of contradictions. Violation of caste norms does not lead to the removal of caste as a principle of social stratification.

Since caste incorporates class and class incorporates caste, neither the "caste view" alone nor the "class view" alone can explain the entire gamut of India's social reality. The fact of the matter is that a perfect congruence between caste, class and power never existed in pre-British India. Mobility and migration were normal activities, particularly resulting from warfare for acquiring power. There were also revolts against the excesses and atrocities committed against the lower castes. In recent years, land reforms, adult franchise and certain constitutional provisions have brought about some incongruities in the "classification of statuses".

We have earlier discussed class relations in ancient, medieval and British periods. Material and cultural traditions existed in a congruent form, and class transformation was a vital fact in the form of new kingdoms, settled agriculture, trade, cities and banking and guild organisations. A.R. Desai observes that caste inheres an underdeveloped but potentially explosive class character. He considers the Indian state "capitalistic" in its essence and reality, as the state holds economic power, and uses political power for granting or denying economic power to the people.

Thus, both caste and class are real dimensions of India's social formation, and seem to be inseparable from each other. Class is not simply a conceptual abstraction, a construct based on certain attributes or operational indices; it is a

concrete reality. Classes of landowners, landless labourers, traders and money-lenders are structural components of Indian society. Interactional ties between them refer to their life situations.

The caste and class nexus is highlighted by Kathleen Gough in her analysis of the mode of production as a social formation in which she finds interconnections between caste, kinship, family and marriage on the one hand and forces of production and production relations on the other. Class relationships are taken as the main assumption in the treatment of caste and kinship in India. Even the varna and jajmani systems are explained by some scholars in terms of class relations and the mode of production.

Caste and class represent, to a large extent, the same structural reality. Yogendra Singh's comments on the caste and class nexus are quite pertinent. "The situation corresponds to a 'prismatic' model of change where traditional sentiments of caste and kinship undergo adaptive transformation without completely being 'diffracted' into classes or corporate groups. Classes operate within the framework of castes." Caste conflicts are also class conflicts as the upper and the lower castes correspond to the high and the low classes, respectively, in terms of their social placement. Castes also function as classes because they function as interest groups. Caste associations undertake several economic and political activities for their members. Joan Mencher finds that caste is used as a very effective system of economic exploitation of the lower castes. The upper castes have not allowed the emergence of a class consciousness among the lower castes (classes); as the former feared a threat to their entrenched status.

peasants, landlords, etc. exists today and has existed in the past. The Marxists consider relations between these classes "capitalistic", hence there exist the "haves" and the "have-nots". A.R. Desai's view is that the state in India has assumed the property norms of a capitalist society as the axis of developmental strategy. Economic determinism, implicit in the orthodox Marxism, is countered by the use of indigenous concepts.

While examining the nature of class and class-conflict in Indian society, five major classes are listed by V.M. Dandekar. These are: (1) pre-capitalist (cultivators, agricultural labourers and household industry), (2) independent workers in capitalist society, (3) employers, (4) white-collar employees, and (5) blue-collar workers. The main classes can also be referred to as: (1) the agrarian classes, (2) the industrial classes, (3) the professional classes, and (4) the business and mercantile classes.

Dandekar expresses his doubts about the application of the Marxian approach to India's class-structure. Large-scale industry and monopoly capitalism have different implications in India compared to their implications in western countries. The roles of trade unions and collective bargaining of workers have been undermined. Along with class-antagonism, class-harmony is also a fact of life. The multiplicity of classes in between the haves and the have-nots cannot escape our attention. The emergence of the new middle classes in India during the British period, and more so after India's independence, does not support a simple two-class theory in regard to the Indian situation. The proletariat is propertyless but he does have a chance for embourgeoisement. The categorisation as 'wage-earners' is a loose one, as it comprises those earning Rs. 200 to 2,000 per month. Thus, like the haves, the have-nots are also a heterogeneous lot. A large number of workers are not "organised".

Further, the Indian state being a "welfare state" is the largest employer today. Can a democratic-welfare state be as oppressive or

exploitative as the monopoly capitalists could be? In India, only one-ninth of the total workers are organised through trade unions. Thus, like caste, class is also a complex phenomenon in Indian society. It overlaps with caste, occupation, factions and pressure groups. Instead of the classes at the top and at the bottom of the class pyramid, the middle classes and the mixed classes have emerged as crucial phenomena in contemporary India.

The resurgence of caste, with its multiple facets, is a new phenomenon in the post-Independence period. Some scholars have analysed class relations as a dominant causality, within which they explain caste and other cultural aspects in Indian society. Class is not simply a result of the new forces of change. Changes are in the traditional castes and class relations and not in caste alone; paving the way to the emergence of class relations. Thus, classes are found as a part of a system of social stratification in the same way as castes are rooted in Indian society. Class, class relations and class-conflict are not monolithic. There are objective criteria of class identification; but class is also a concrete unit of interaction *vis-à-vis* other units.

Caste inheres numerous problems related to economic domination and subjugation, privileges and deprivations, and conspicuous waste and bare survival. Class relationships are treated as background assumptions in the treatment of caste and kinship in India. The jajmani system can be explained in terms of class relations and the mode of production.

Caste riots are frequent in areas where economic deprivations have been reported. The upper castes have waged a class war against Harijans. Dalits or Harijans have been attacked and murdered, their womenfolk raped and put to indignities by the upper caste landlord families. The intermediate castes have ascended in the class hierarchy, but they are struggling against the upper castes socially and politically. These castes have been benefitted by land reforms and adult franchise more than other caste groups.

The Brahmins have lost their traditional dominance.

The caste system is used as an effective method of economic exploitation. The dominant class (caste) also acquires political power and social prestige with which it further perpetuates and consolidates caste hierarchy. Thus, caste hierarchy reflects ownership of land, and economic hierarchy is closely linked with social hierarchy. Caste determines a definite relation to the means of production and subsistence, specially in rural areas. Caste riots reflect conflict of class-interests. Ambedkar rightly observed that the caste system was not merely a division of labour, but also a division of labourers. However, caste prevents labourers from becoming a class-by-itself, hence caste is an ideology. Caste has persisted as a religious and feudal ideology.

Incongruities between caste, class and power are indicative of social mobility in the caste system. The corporate character of caste is under attack; the dominant castes do not enjoy hegemony of power. Sanskritisation, as a process of change, affects dominance of the upper castes, and creates an awareness among the lower castes about their rights. However, it has been noted that castes are not dominant; only families and individuals enjoy dominance and power. Corporate mobility (sanskritisation) is generally not feasible in economic and political spheres. Mobility in the caste system, therefore, takes place at three levels: (1) individual, (2) family, and (3) group. The three levels are interrelated but are analytically distinct from each other.

Castes function as interest-groups because they strive for new patterns of distributive justice of equality. Caste associations, caste panchayats and caste-run magazines have strengthened caste-ideology. Caste lobbies in parliament, state assemblies and in zila parishads, panchayat samitis and village panchayats have become a fact of today's political life.

Elections have been fought very much on caste lines. Caste and politics have come to stay together. Caste is very much a source of power for its members. Corporateness has acquired new

dimension—from ritual activities it has shifted to elections, jobs and employment opportunities. Castes have not become classes simply in economic or psychological terms. Caste continues to retain the ethos of the system in terms of organising intra-caste and inter-caste relations in certain spheres. Untouchability, pollution-purity, norms regarding dinning, etc. have weakened, but expression of caste solidarity in social and political spheres has acquired a new character.

Conclusion

In this chapter we discussed the evolution of the caste system in ancient, medieval, British and modern India. In the beginning it was a system for division of labour devised for the smooth functioning of society; but later on it became a rigid system based on birth and hereditary occupation. Social relations between different caste groups were regulated by certain norms. At this stage, varnas got transformed into caste groups. Varnaashrama with further distinctions attained a sort of religious character. Class or occupational distinctions crystallised in the early medieval period. In fact, the ritual aspect of caste became rigid in this period in the face of foreign invasions.

The British rule in India brought about further diversification, differentiation and change in the caste system. In pursuance of their policy of "divide and rule", the British encouraged continuity of the caste system. Though caste could not remain an "organic" system, yet it continued to remain "segmentary" in nature. Today, with the decline of the jajmani system and other changes, a given caste is a segregated unit. At times it is an interest group, a source of mobilisation at the time of elections and other

the framework of castes, and castes take care of class interests. In caste-conflict, there is more of class-conflict. We, therefore, find resurgence of caste in very many situations with new facets.

The corporateness of the caste system has been eroded at the ritual level; but has emerged at political and economic levels.

EXERCISES

1. Explain the varna scheme. Discuss its role in ancient India. Was it a functional system?
2. Bring out the relationship between ritual and economic aspects of the caste system in ancient and medieval India.
3. Compare and contrast the caste system in the medieval and the British periods.
4. Attempt a suitable definition of the caste system. Is this phenomenon also found in non-Hindu communities in India?
5. What is a "caste model" of Indian society? Can the caste system be treated as an ideology?
6. In what respects is caste different from class and varna?
7. Caste inheres class and class inheres caste. Elucidate.
8. Explain the cultural and structural aspects of the caste system.
9. Define social mobility. Discuss the nature of caste mobility in India.
10. Prepare notes on the following:
 - i. Functional view of caste
 - ii. Hierarchy
 - iii. Pollution-purity
 - iv. Politicisation of caste
 - v. Structural and positional changes

The Scheduled Castes

Introduction

The position of the Scheduled Caste has a bearing on the social structure of the "caste society", that is, division of Hindu society into caste groups. At the top of the caste hierarchy are Brahmins. The "Untouchables" come at the bottom. There are several caste groups in between. Ritual pollution and purity based on birth in a particular caste group is considered the basis of high and low caste ranks. The value of pollution-purity pervades all aspects of social life including food, cloth, metals, occupations, etc. Thus, not only are persons and castes pure and impure or less pure or more impure, but everything in Hindu society is seen in terms of the value of purity-pollution. Gold is pure and silver is less pure; silk is pure and cotton is impure, etc. There are some of the notions we find even today

been assigned to perform under the caste system. These twin notions of Dharma and Karma have made the caste system stagnant and regimented. Since Brahmins were at the top of caste hierarchy, they were the rule-makers and prescribers of norms. They are even today considered the model for social and cultural mobility.

In chapters two and seven, we discussed the evolution of the division of labour and the caste system. Those who occupied the lowest position pursued *defiling occupations*. They were at the bottom of the caste hierarchy, and were known as *Chandals*, (exterior castes). They lived on the outskirts of towns and villages. These castes remained low and suppressed for ages. They have been listed as "Scheduled Caste."

The Constitution of India has listed the "untouchable" castes as the "Scheduled Castes" with a view to provide them protection against discrimination, exploitation and degradation. It provides for their social, economic, political, cultural and educational upliftment. A policy of reservation of jobs, positions, educational facilities and of reserved constituencies for State Assemblies and the Lok Sabha and of nomination to local bodies has been adopted by the government of independent India.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a leader who fought for a place of honour and dignity for the scheduled castes during the freedom struggle. The British conceded political representation to the "untouchables" by the Communal Award. Gandhi did not agree to this because the Muslims had already made such a demand with a view to quicken the growth of separatism and communalisation of social relations. Gandhi undertook a fast unto death against the Communal Award. The Award was withdrawn under the Poona Pact, and Gandhi broke his fast. It was stated that Harijans were part of the Hindu social order, and, therefore, their condition had to be ameliorated within the framework of the system. Ambedkar became a Buddhist at the fag end of his life. However, he did his best as Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee to make constitutional provisions for the upliftment of the millions of downtrodden Harijans. The name Harijans was given to the "untouchables" by Gandhi. The word means "children of God" and implies that they needed special treatment. Gandhi started a periodical entitled *Harijan* to highlight the plight of the children of God.

Provisions have been made against social discrimination and untouchability, with a view to attain equality of the SCs with the caste Hindus. However, ascriptive status cannot be changed simply by constitutional provisions. The processes of social change and modernisation of traditional values alone can bring about a change in course of time. The Constitution of India makes provisions for the upliftment of the scheduled castes in economic, political and educational fields. Since these

provisions have made a tangible impact and have generated a certain level of consciousness among the scheduled caste, the upper and intermediate castes have begun to feel uncomfortable. Clashes between the caste Hindus and the scheduled castes have been frequently reported from different states. The scheduled castes are emerging as a force to reckon with; representing secular values, egalitarianism and the quest for equality. However, some sections of the scheduled castes who have derived considerable benefits from the constitutional provisions have attained an elite status among the scheduled castes. These sections continue to enjoy the special provisions despite enormous improvement in their socio-economic condition.

In some areas the scheduled castes are still not allowed access to temples, tea stalls and public wells or water taps. However, today demands are rarely of a religious and ritual nature. What the Harijans demand today is to be treated as persons. They should not be driven from their land. They should no longer be bonded labourers, and should be given fair wages. Their children should be educated and equal to children of other communities. They should be allowed to have their say in all democratic institutions. However, the fact remains that the scheduled castes continue to be inferior to the caste Hindus in all secular or mundane matters. Scheduled caste leaders are subordinate to the caste leaders. The scheduled caste votes have been controlled by different political groups and parties. The leaders of these castes do not wish to be identified with the scheduled castes. They, in fact, desire to be identified with the upper caste leadership.

Nearly 90 per cent of the scheduled castes live in villages, and they continue to suffer because they work under the command of the dominant castes and landlords. They continue to be economically dependent on the upper caste and class groups. Constitutional provisions have been availed of by the poor Harijans in a very marginal way. Since they continue to be poor, they are objects of exploitation.

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It is not that caste has withered away with all its class-like character, and untouchability has been continuing and vice-versa. Since caste remains a pivotal force (in the garb of class, untouchability refers to a situation of exploitation, suppression and powerlessness of the wretched of the earth. Naturally, the exploiters are the well-off caste Hindus, landlords and big peasants. Harijans may not be doing today what they were forced to do a couple of decades ago, but they remain under the economic and social hegemony of the upper castes and the landed interests.

The Constitutional Provisions

Article 46 of the Constitution of India provides: "The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation." In view of this constitutional obligation, several provisions have been provided; such as the reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes in the State Assemblies and Panchayati Raj institutions, Parliament, and reservation of jobs at various levels. Article 17 declares: "Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of untouchability shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law." In pursuance of these constitutional provisions, several programmes have been undertaken for the welfare of the scheduled castes.

The question is: "How close to equality are scheduled castes?" Compared to caste Hindus, the Scheduled Castes are still far behind in regard to landholding, and in economic and social mobility. Urbanisation and education are much less among them. Their per capita income is also low. Only a few of the posts in the administration reserved for the scheduled castes are actually filled. The same is true in regard to completion of education even upto secondary level.

Inequalities among the Scheduled Castes

Several studies have shown that new inequalities have crept in among the scheduled castes due to uneven educational attainments. Education has not filtered down as expected. Equal access for unequal groups is not true equality. Even the awareness and acceptance necessary for the optimum use of educational opportunities are not uniformly found among the scheduled castes. It is therefore said that the spread of education among the scheduled castes has created social classes among them on lines parallel to those existing among higher castes.

A number of observations have been made which substantiate the emergence of inequalities among the scheduled castes. For example, the scheme of post-matric scholarship is neither equitably distributed nor optimally used. Caste patterns within the scheduled castes determine differential distribution and utilisation of scholarships and other amenities. Even independent of the imbalances created by education and other measures for their welfare, there are clear differences in terms of social and economic status. There is a well-recognised hierarchy among them. There are degrees of defilement and pollution among them. There are also religious cleavages among the scheduled castes. Each one of the scheduled castes is aware of its separate identity, and at the same time conscious of their common status as scheduled castes.

The scheduled castes have elites from within their ranks. The elite are educated, economically better off, elected members of the State Assembly, Parliament, Zila Parishad and Panchayat Samiti. It is by and large realised that unevenness among the scheduled castes is inherently prevalent and is also created by the faulty implementation of policies and programmes designed for their welfare. It is this unevenness that is mainly responsible for their backwardness. Awareness of this unevenness could have a levelling effect on these weaker sections. However, more changes would come only through effective distributive justice and

THE SCHEDULED CASTES

Harijans by the Caste-Hindus. At times the issues of dignity and upper-lower caste conflict prominently figure in de-humanising the "untouchables"

In July 1978, in Maharashtra, riots began due to the renaming of the Marathwada University as Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar University. The conflict crystallised between the Dalit and the Non-Dalit student activists. The movement against the Dalits provoked violence; including the killing of people, molestation and rape of Harijan women, burning of Harijan houses and huts, pillaging their bastis, eviction from their houses and villages, killing of their cattle, denying them drinking water and refusing them work. The upper caste dominants were indignant that the Marathwada University could be renamed after a Harijan leader. They thought it against their dignity and a step towards lowering their position in the region.

Incidents of atrocities due to land disputes, payment of wages at lower rates, indebtedness, forced labour and denial of access to public places have become a routine matter. In 1977,

there were 8905 cases of atrocities on the Scheduled Castes; and more than fifty per cent of them were reported from Uttar Pradesh.

Conclusion

Harijans have made several efforts to come out of the clutches of the dominant sections of caste-Hindu society. These include sanskritisation, conversion to Buddhism, migration, education, urban employment, etc. Recently, the educated Harijans have also shown some militancy against their oppressors. The Dalit Literature Movement in Maharashtra has been launched to create consciousness among the Harijans about their rightful place in Indian society. Dalit writers have written articles on the pitiable condition of the Dalits. Dalit magazines and periodicals have been launched. Seminars and symposia have been organised to propagate Dalit literature. The Harijans have yet to go a long way to achieve equality with the non-Harijans. These efforts are more in the nature of a quest for equality rather than actual realisation of equality with the caste-Hindus.

EXERCISES

1. What are the main problems of the Scheduled Castes of India?
2. Discuss the main constitutional provisions made available to the Scheduled Castes.
3. Highlight the contributions of Mahatma Gandhi and Ambedkar to the upliftment of Harijans in India.
4. Bring out the patterns of social mobility among the Scheduled Castes; particularly since Independence.
5. Explain the following:
 - i. Pollution-purity
 - ii. Untouchability
 - iii. Atrocities on Harijans

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Chapter IX

The Scheduled Tribes

Introduction

The tribes of India are varied in terms of their socio-economic and political development. Some of them have changed through Hinduisation, through conversion to Christianity or through some other route. Some tribal people are in the transitional phase, while others are adhering to their old life styles to a large extent. This shows an uneven process of change and development among the tribal people in India. Only a small number of tribal people have been benefited by the policies and programmes meant for their development. According to the 1971 census, the tribal population is 38,015,162, that is about 7 per cent of the total population of India. Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Bihar have 8,387,403, 5,071,937 and 4,932,767 respectively. Gujarat and Rajasthan have over 3 million each. Maharashtra has 8 per cent. Assam 6.84, West Bengal 6.81 and Andhra Pradesh 4.39 per cent tribal population. Laccadives, Minocoy and Amindivi Islands have 97.03 per cent, Nagaland 93.09, NEFA 88.59, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli 88.43 per cent. Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana and Himachal have a negligible number of tribals. According to 1981 census, the percentage of the Scheduled Tribe population is 7.6. Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Bihar have the Scheduled Caste population ranging from 22.97% in M.P. to 8.31% in Bihar. In the smaller states like Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Meghalaya more than 80% of their population is tribal.

L.P. Vidyarthi classifies the tribal people into

(1) Himalayan, (2) middle India, (3) western India, and (4) southern India regions. These tribes, numbering about 450, belong to various racial, linguistic, economic, social and religious categories. There are numerous differences between these tribes because they are at different levels of development and participation in national life. However, in general terms, the tribals are economically, educationally and politically backward, compared to the non-tribal groups. There is a "tribal identity", despite the tribals' proximity to caste groups. According to the 1981 census, the Scheduled Tribes form 7.76 per cent of the total population, whereas they were 6.82 per cent at the time of the 1971 census. There are very small tribes as well as very large ones. Variations are also quite prominent in regard to the economic pursuits they follow. There are nomadic tribes as well as the ones which have settled down at one place and have been engaged in agriculture and other occupations like the caste Hindu.

Towards a Definition of Tribes

G.S. Ghurye, in the revised edition of his book *The Scheduled Tribes* (1959) writes: "The Scheduled Tribes are neither called the 'Aborigines', nor the 'Adivasis', nor are they treated as a category by themselves. By and large they are treated together with the Scheduled Castes and further envisaged as one group of the Backward classes." This is the quintessence of the constitutional viewpoint about the Scheduled Tribes. Obviously, Ghurye would like the tribes of India to be treated as distinct social and cultural

and revivalism. (2) isolationism and preservation; and (3) assimilation. No change and revivalism has been supported by Elwin; whereas isolationism has been advocated by Hutton. The famous anthropologist, S.C. Roy, was an assimilationist. One finds a sort of problem in the present-day situation. Protective discrimination isolates the tribal people from the non-tribesmen, but in course of time this very policy would bring the tribals at par with the non-tribals. The dominant thinking today is in favour of assimilation of the tribal people into the national mainstream without any disruption.

Since tribal people are at different social, political, economic and ecological levels, their problems also differ in degree from each other. These differences can be seen in terms of hill tribes and plainsmen; and those engaged in forest-based economic pursuits and the ones who are employed as settled agriculturists; or those who are Hinduised or converted to Christianity and those who are adhering to an unadulterated tribal way of life. Despite these distinctions, some common problems of the tribal people are: (1) poverty and exploitation, (2) economic and technological backwardness, (3) socio-cultural handicaps, and (4) problems related to their assimilation with the non-tribal population.

S.C. Dube's five-fold classification of the Indian tribes provides a clear picture of the problem of tribes in India: (1) aboriginals living in seclusion; (2) tribal groups having an association with the neighbouring non-tribal society and also maintaining their distinctiveness; (3) tribals living in villages along with caste groups, sects and religious groups and maintaining their identity; (4) tribals who have been degraded to the status of untouchables, and (5) tribals who enjoy high social, economic and political status. Such a classification is basically based on the nature of cultural contact of the tribals with non-tribals. The U.N. Dhebar Commission recommended that an area be declared "tribal" where more than 50 per cent of the people were tribals. Economic criteria have also been suggested, such as, dependence upon forests for food, primitive

agriculture, agriculture and forests both as sources of livelihood, and modern occupations, particularly employment in industries.

The tribal people had a strong sense of community life before the British rulers and Hindu zamindars and moneylenders intruded into their lives. Exchange of goods and transactions at weekly markets and fairs were the basic mode of economic relations. However, the British took over the forests on which they depended for their livelihood. The moneylenders brought them under their control by extending loans, at exorbitant interest rates and then by mortgaging their lands, alienating them from land they cultivated. Indebtedness led to exploitation and pauperisation of the tribal people. Hinduisation has also contributed to indebtedness and exploitation; as the tribals adopted Hindu ways of life and rituals which forced them to spend as the Hindus did. Tribals occupied a very low rank in Hindu society after they copied Hinduism.

At some places the tribals have been made to serve as bonded labourers. The Doms and Koltas in U.P. serve the upper caste families even today. In Rajasthan, the *Sagri* system, in Andhra, the *Vetti* system, in Orissa the *Gothi*, in Karnataka the *Jetha* and in M.P. the *Naukrinama* are the examples of the bondedness of the tribals. They have borrowed money from the moneylenders, but have not been able to pay it back and are bound to work till they return the loan. A situation of emancipation does not arise, as a tribal is not able to repay the loan completely and quickly.

K.S. Singh points out that agrarian issues are basic to tribal development in India. The tribal agrarian problem cannot be treated in isolation. Tribal people have to be treated along with other weaker sections of Indian society. Keeping the situation of Bihar in view Singh observes that the concept of aliens (diku) is crucial to the understanding of an agrarian situation where non-tribals outnumber tribals. The class of moneylenders has arisen due to several factors including the agrarian legislation. Alienation of land has resulted from tribal backwardness and indebted-

ness. Integrated Tribal Development Blocks have not produced the desired results in the tribal areas. Famine and drought have become a recurrent feature. The tribal sub-plan has been introduced to combat problems of famine, drought, illiteracy, indebtedness, exploitation, etc. by taking up special schemes for the development of tribal areas.

A study of the impact of the decentralisation of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) trade on the tribals of Bihar shows that the dominant causality is economic (MFP trade takeover) rather than political and ideological. The study refers to the control of forest produce like bamboo, kendu leaves, Mahua, Kusum, Karanj and sal seeds, being taken over by the government of Bihar. The MFP contributes about 35 per cent of the state's revenue from forests. The takeover has adversely affected the institution of *hat* (weekly market), where the tribals carried out economic transactions and also performed several social and cultural activities. Forests provided a collective life to the tribals, and this was being denied to them as a result of the MFP trade takeover. The tribals have been agitated over this step taken by the government of Bihar.

Per capita landholding has decreased among the tribals due to three reasons: (1) alienation of land due to indebtedness and socio-economic backwardness; (2) increase in tribal population; and (3) takeover of tribal lands by the government for establishing industries. Land was alienated much before legislations were passed by

economical, but also causes deforestation and soil erosion. Since the tribals have no alternative source of livelihood, they continue to use shifting cultivation and cutting of forests for their livelihood. In protest against the government's policy of MFP takeover in Bihar, the tribals cut forests on a large scale in the Singhbhum and other districts. Forest cooperatives can do a lot to ameliorate the pitiable plight of the tribals, but unfortunately the benefits from these societies have reached largely the well off sections of the Bhils, Meenas, Oraons, etc.

The dilemma for the tribal people in India is the choice between isolation and contact. Isolation keeps the tribals away from forces of change and development; and contact with the wider society creates problems of adjustment, cultural shock and disintegration of tribal social organisation and community living. The intrusion of outsiders into tribal life, for example, has adversely affected the institutions of weekly markets, dormitory and reciprocal relationships. The institutions of untouchability, pollution, purity and high and low status have made inroads into tribal life. The tribals to a large extent become a "caste" or "pseudo-caste" by this process of cultural contact. Ignorance, illiteracy, superstition and poverty are the major problems of the tribal people in the Indian sub-continent.

or too integrated with Hindu society are not involved in these socio-cultural movements. The Unnati Samaj, an organisation established in 1912 for socio-cultural reforms, and the Adivasi Mahasabha established in 1938, aimed at revivalism in Bihar. The Jharkhand movement in 1950 was, however, started to fight land alienation, exploitation and for political solidarity among the tribes of Bihar and the adjoining states of Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. This movement ultimately made a demand for the formation of a separate state for the adivasis of these four states.

Tribal movements encompass a very wide arena. The unique geopolitical situation and historical background need to be taken into consideration while analysing movements in the North-East, Manipur, Nagaland and Mizoram. Movements in these areas generally refer to cultural and political revivalism. Political autonomy, control over the forests, socio-religious, cultural and linguistic considerations have been the key factors in other tribal movements. For example, in case of the Jharkhand movement in Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and M.P., the main points are related to historicity, ideology, structure, leadership, and sub-regional identity. Socio-cultural movements have given primacy to status-elevation through sanskritisation. The various modes of status-elevation include emphasis on a specific script, language, religion and ethnic identity for various tribal communities.

A given region may have a particular type of movement because of its specific geographical and political situation in the wider context. S.M. Dubey provides a classification of tribal movements in North-East India: (1) religious and social reform movements; (2) state formation movements; (3) insurgent movements; and (4) culturological movements. An all-India tribal movement has not emerged because of the diversity and unevenness among the tribes of India. K.S. Singh has written detailed accounts of 36 tribal movements in India; of which 14 were in the north-east region alone. Singh classifies the various movements into: (1) movements for

political autonomy; (2) agrarian and forest-based movements; (3) sanskritisation process; and (4) cultural movements.

The questions which still remain inadequately answered are: (1) Why have the tribals been pressing for cultural revivalism, autonomy and restoration of aboriginality? (2) Why have some tribes been making efforts for cultural, ethnic, and linguistic revivalism? (3) Why have some others been raising their voice for the formation of a separate state, and for a greater share in educational institutions, jobs and other opportunities? Exploitation of the adivasis by outsiders, non-adivasis, and dominant elements from among the tribals has now become a fact of life.

The Integration of the Tribals with the Non-Tribals

In their own interest, the British pursued a policy of isolation of the tribals. The British retained under their control, tribal chief with curtailed powers. Today, integration of the tribals with the non-tribals is the cornerstone of the policy of the Government of India. The Constitutional provisions are as follows: (1) Article 46; "The state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation." (2) Article 244, "Empowers the President to declare any areas, where there is a substantial population of tribal people, as scheduled area under the 5th schedule or in Assam as a tribal area under the 6th schedule." (3) Article 275; "There shall be paid out of the Consolidated Fund of India as grants-in-aid of the revenues of a state such capital and recurring sums as may be necessary to enable that state to meet the costs of such schemes of development as may be undertaken by the state with the approval of the Government of India for the purpose of promoting the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes in that state or raising the level of administration of the Scheduled areas therein to that of the administration of the rest of that state."

THE SCHEDULED TRIBES

economic and political changes. Tribal identity has been asserted by making efforts for revival of tribal cultures, scripts and languages. Demands for control on forests and forest produce, for the formation of states for tribal people, and for the exclusion of non-tribals from tribal areas are some of the issues taken up by leaders of various tribal movements. These movements have cer-

tainly resulted in an increased level of cultural and political consciousness among the tribes in various parts of India. However, to make these movements more effective it is necessary to reduce intra-tribal economic distinctions. The constitutional provisions are not equally shared. Distributive justice has not been the end result of these provisions and other efforts.

EXERCISES

1. Define scheduled tribes. How are they different from scheduled castes and other backward classes?
2. Give a brief account of the tribal map of India.
3. What constitutional provisions have been made for the scheduled tribes? Are they adequate enough for their upliftment?
4. Explain the term "conversion". What do you understand by conversion of tribal people to Christianity and Hinduism?
5. What are the main problems of the tribes of India?
6. Explain the possible solutions to the problems of tribal people.
7. Discuss intra-tribal stratification. What are its reasons?
8. In what way are agrarian issues basic to tribal development in India?
9. Explain the following:
 - i. Cultural revivalism
 - ii. Land alienation
 - iii. Tribal elite
 - iv. Bhagat movement
 - v. Jharkhand movement
10. What are the main features of tribal social movements in India?
11. In what way have tribals come closer to non-tribals in contemporary India?

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Chapter X

The Other Backward Classes

Introduction

The Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes together are considered backward and form about one-third of the total population of India. We have discussed the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in earlier chapters. In this chapter we will cover the Other Backward Classes in our discussion. The Other Backward Classes are entitled to special provisions in education and employment. Unlike the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, they are not given the privilege of political representation through reserved constituencies. How do we define the category "backward classes"? Castes and occupations are two structural

down upon the "backwards". The Backward Classes movement in Bihar gained currency in the late 1970s; particularly in 1977, when the Janata Party formed government at the centre and in various states. Karpoori Thakur, who belongs to a backward caste, was Bihar's chief minister in 1977.

Caste and agriculture are closely related in India. The higher castes have traditionally large landholders. The lower castes work as landless agricultural labourers. The intermediate castes are the principal agricultural castes in terms of actual cultivation as peasants. Thus, they are not at the intermediate level in terms of both caste and agricultural pursuits. However, the situation

Other Backward Classes. The term has also been used to designate any other backward classes. In the beginning, after India's Independence, the term "backward classes" had a less fixed and definite reference. It has a variety of referents. Earlier the term "depressed classes" was used for the "untouchables" and other backward groups. It is certainly a fact that the backward classes are above the ex-untouchable groups and below the twice-born castes. They need special protection and help for their economic and social upliftment. We find references to this term in 1917-18, but the term was more specifically used in 1930 or 1931. In 1937, the State of Travancore used the term "backward communities" to include all educationally and economically backward communities. But in the Madras Presidency, the term "backward classes" was used to refer to the strata above the untouchables. In 1934, the Madras Provincial Backward Classes League was founded. The "backward classes" in Madras included more than a hundred communities and 50 per cent of the total population of the Presidency. Thus, the term backward classes had no uniform meaning at the national level. There was no all-India organisation of the backward classes.

In 1948 it was visualised that a Backward Classes Commission be appointed to go through the whole of the country to find out which Castes of Hindus, Muslims, etc., were really backward according to certain standards—educational, social, economic, etc. The Commission was supposed to find out the difficulties under which they worked and to make recommendations as to the steps that should be taken by the Union or any State to remove such difficulties and improve their condition. The Commission was actually appointed in 1953.

The University Education Commission (1948-49) also mentioned the reservation of a certain proportion of seats for students belonging to the backward communities. In 1947, the Bihar Government made provisions for other backward classes in post-matriculation studies. In 1951, the Government of Bihar announced a list of backward classes. The list contained the names

of various castes, which constituted 60 per cent of the state's population. In 1948, the Government of Uttar Pradesh gave educational concessions to Other Backward Classes. A list of 56 castes was prepared, which covered 65 per cent of the population. Thus, even before the implementation of the Constitution, the notion of Backward Classes existed; referring to the groups between the top and bottom strata of society based on their economic and educational backwardness.

Several backward classes organisations emerged in late 1940s. The Bihar State Backward Classes Federation was founded in 1947. In 1954, there were 88 organisations working for the Backward Classes in 15 states. Seventyfour of these were named after specific castes and 14 functioned in general, on a regional or local basis. The All-India Backward Classes Federation was formed in 1950. A national federation was also formed. Lists of Backward Classes were prepared by the state governments. The list in Karnataka included Muslims, Christians, Jains and all non-Hindu groups other than Brahmins. However, the lists in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra did not include the higher non-Brahmin castes.

Backwardness is considered an attribute of a group and not of an individual. Membership to these "backward classes" is determined by birth, like for all other caste groups. In theory, Backward Classes may include individuals who are educationally and economically well off. Since some castes have been designated as "backward" by the Government, they are entitled to get certain benefits and facilities. The Backward Classes are, thus, a large and complex constellation of groups and individuals.

Since we are here concerned with the backward classes who are, in effect, intermediate castes in between the Harijans and the upper castes, we do not refer to the term "backward classes" in a broad perspective. The "backward classes" are "backward" because they have been lagging behind in education, government services, professions, business, etc. However, in the

recent years, they have advanced in economic and political fields. They are small landowners, depending mainly on agriculture for their livelihood. Numerically, they are preponderant, but they are not a monolithic group socially, culturally and economically. According to the Mandal Commission, the Other Backward Classes constitute nearly 52 per cent of India's population.

The Constitution of India mentions the backward classes as being "socially and educationally backward classes of citizens". Article 340 authorises the President of India to appoint a Commission to investigate and report on the conditions of the backward classes in different parts of the country. The state governments also [under articles 15(4) and 16] can appoint commissions to look into the social and educational problems of different backward castes, and can also make reservations in educational institutions and government services based on the findings of such commissions. The criteria of backwardness differ from state to state as, no all-India index of backwardness exists.

their social and economic development. About 70 per cent of India's population was considered backward. The following criteria were suggested for determining backwardness.

- (1) Low social position in the caste hierarchy;
- (2) Lack of educational progress;
- (3) Inadequate representation in government service; and
- (4) Inadequate representation in the fields of trade, commerce and industry.

Caste was taken as the key factor in making a list of backward classes. The Commission thought that the problems of a caste-ridden society could be minimised by promotion of the socially and educationally backward classes. Though the Commission did not have adequate data on castes, it proposed reservation of at least 25 per cent in Class I, 33.5 per cent in Class II and 40 per cent in Class III and IV services for the castes listed as backward. It recommended 70 per cent reservation in the fields of medical, scientific and technical education. The Commission also recommended the formation of a separate ministry for Backward Classes Welfare.

vidual and family would be the best units for judging backwardness because the criterion of caste was somewhat vague and was also against the principles of democracy as it further promoted caste and class distinctions.

The Government of India rejected the recommendation of the Commission that caste be the basis for identifying economic and educational backwardness. The Centre asked the state governments to conduct surveys to identify members of the backward classes, and then to extend them all reasonable facilities. In 1961, the Centre decided not to draw up any list of Other Backward Classes. The states were advised to draw up their own lists using economic tests, rather than going by caste. A number of states decided to use the criteria of occupation and income to classify backward groups.

The Criteria of Backwardness in States

Only eight states are reported to have accepted the policy of reservation in the services. Since the Centre did not come to a conclusion regarding uniform criteria for determining backwardness, the states were left free to evolve their own criteria and lists of backward groups. Sometimes local, social and political conditions have influenced drawing up of the lists of backward classes in different states. Some politically influential groups make efforts to remain classified as backward classes to retain the facilities and concessions extended to them. Even the economically better off and socially upward mobile groups have a vested interest in continuing to be classified as backward. Several caste groups have demanded their inclusion in the category of backward classes. "The Lingayats and Vokkaligas in Karnataka, the Ezhavas and Nayers in Kerala, the Reddis and Kammas in Andhra, Nadars and Vaniyars in Tamil Nadu, Kurmis, Ahirs and Koiris in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have always exerted pressure for their continued recognition as backward classes. The dominant castes are able to strike a political bargain with those in power for being classified as backward classes." A number of castes like the

Jatavas of Agra, who found sanskritisation no longer attractive, decided to politicise themselves to extract greater dividends.

In 1966, the Government of Andhra Pradesh decided to use "family" for classifying backward groups instead of caste. However, this was dropped due to legal complications, and in 1970 a list of 92 communities was prepared which now are treated as backward classes. 25 per cent of the government jobs are reserved for these castes and communities. The Government of Bihar introduced the policy of job-reservation for 128 backward castes and communities in 1978. Their decision was based mainly on the suggestions of the Kaka Kalelkar Commission and of the Mungeri Lal Commission. The latter was constituted by the Government of Bihar. Ahirs, Kurmis and Koiris form about three-fifths of the total backward classes population of Bihar. They are, in fact, not so backward and derive maximum benefit from the policy of job-reservation. Violent protests were witnessed against this policy in Bihar. It was decided to fix an income ceiling of Rs. 12,000 per annum per family for qualifying as a beneficiary of the scheme. Today 26 per cent of the jobs are reserved for backward classes in Bihar.

Since 1960, the Karnataka Government has decided to adopt the criteria of income and occupation of a family, irrespective of caste, religion or race, as the basis of backwardness. However, upto 1960, all the castes were treated as backward, except the Brahmins in Karnataka. In 1972, the Government of Karnataka appointed a Backward Classes Commission with L.G. Havanur as its Chairman. After conducting a massive survey, the commission prepared a list of backward castes and communities. The Commission rejected the criteria of income and occupation, as it benefited the Brahmins, Lingayats and Vokkaligas most, to advance their interests at the cost of the really backward groups. The Commission prepared a list of the backward classes based on the criteria of caste and economic standing. A reservation of 32 per cent of the jobs was recommended for these classes. How-

ever, the government decided to include a few more castes in this category and also increased the quota of reservation from 32 to 40 per cent.

The Kerala Government appointed a Backward Classes Commission, under the chairmanship of P.D. Nettur, which submitted its report in 1970. The Commission recommended the criteria of educational attainment, economic position, and appropriateness in the appointment to government service and social backwardness. The Commission made an effort to eliminate the already advantaged families, irrespective of their caste and religion. Despite legal and other difficulties, some success has been achieved in Kerala. Today 25 per cent of the jobs are reserved for the backward classes in Kerala.

In Maharashtra, 14 per cent, and in Tamil Nadu 50 per cent of jobs are reserved for the listed backward classes. The Uttar Pradesh government has listed 58 communities and castes as backward and 15 per cent of the jobs are reserved for them. Jammu and Kashmir has reserved 40 per cent of the jobs for the backward communities and castes.

Thus, the states which have made reservations for the backward classes are: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

These states have accepted the principle of compensatory discrimination to counter the inherited caste-based inequalities. However, this principle has been used by dominant political groups and parties to their advantage to some extent. Income and occupation, as criteria of determining backwardness, have been upheld, but could not be implemented. Caste continues to be the sole criterion for judging backwardness.

tions of Indian society. The party promised to reserve between 25 and 33 per cent of all appointments to government services and educational opportunities for the Backward Classes. The Government of India, headed by the Janata Party, appointed a Backward Classes Commission under the chairmanship of B.P. Mandal, Member of Parliament, with a view to get definite recommendations by which it could implement its election promises. The following were the terms of reference of the Mandal Commission:

- (1) to determine the criteria for defining the socially and educationally backward classes;
- (2) to recommend steps to be taken for the advancement of the socially and educationally backward classes of citizens so identified;
- (3) to examine the desirability or otherwise of making provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of such backward classes of citizens which are not adequately represented in the services of both the central and the state government union territory admini-

- (3) The reserved quota, if unfilled, should be carried forward for a period of three years and de-reserved thereafter.
- (4) Age relaxation for the backward classes should be the same as it is in the case of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.
- (5) A roster system should be prepared for the backward classes, on the pattern of the one done for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.
- (6) The principle of reservation should be made applicable to all the public sector undertakings, banks, private undertakings receiving grants from the central and state governments, universities and colleges.
- (7) The Government should make the necessary legal provisions for implementing these recommendations.

The Commission recommended the implementation of an intensive and time-bound programme for adult education, particularly for the Backward Classes, and the setting up of residential schools for the Backward Class students. The principle of reservation of 27 per cent was suggested for the reservation of seats in educational institutions as well as in jobs. Suggestions for the economic upliftment of the Backward Classes were also made by the Commission, with a view to bring about structural changes in Indian society.

The Backward Classes Movements

The upper castes dominated in traditional Indian society. The Backward Classes aimed at capturing political power and socio-economic ascendance in the states. The Backward Castes' leaders insisted upon caste as the basis of determination of backwardness. The important Backward Classes movements in pre-Independence India included: (1) Jyoti Rao Phule's movement in the Bombay Presidency (1870-1930), and (2) the anti-Brahmin Nadar movement in Madras.

Jyoti Rao Phule founded the Satyashodhak Samaj in 1873. The leadership of the Samaj came

from the Backward Classes, namely, the Malis, Telis, Kunbis and Satis. Phule himself was a Mali (gardener). Social service, and the spread of education among women and lower caste people were the main aims of his movement. Brahmins opposed the movement, since it challenged the Brahmanical supremacy. Phule aimed at the complete abolition of the caste system and socio-economic inequalities. He was against Sanskrit Hinduism. One view is that Phule focussed on cultural and ethnic factors alone ignoring the economic and political ones. It was in essence an anti-Brahmin movement. It was a sort of "cultural revolution".

The backward castes movement in South India was an anti-Brahmin movement. E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker was the leader of the anti-Brahmin movement. The Dravida Kazhagam in Tamil means the organisation of the Dravidians. The D.M.K. was formed by C.N. Annadurai in 1949; and, in 1970, M.G. Ramachandran founded the All-India D.M.K. These parties have taken an anti-Brahmin stance in politics. The S.N.D.P. movement in Kerala was more of a reformist movement, as it emphasised the upliftment of the non-Brahmin Nayar caste. Thus, the main goals of the backward castes movements have been either anti-Brahminism or reformism or both.

Brahmins have enjoyed not only their superiority over others, but also have acquired greater power and privileges as a result of the spread of western education. They became, therefore, an object of envy for other castes, particularly for those at the middle rung of caste hierarchy. The Brahmins have been a numerical minority, and they were distrusted by the British because they spearheaded the national movement. On these two counts, the backward classes thought it necessary to weaken the social and political hegemony of the Brahmins. The Western-educated elite from among the backward castes took up the leadership of the anti-Brahmin movement. In fact, the Backward Castes movement expressed the ambitions and frustrations of

EXERCISES

1. Define the main criteria for determining the backwardness of various caste groups other than for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.
2. Discuss caste as the basis of backwardness in education and economic fields.
3. Give a brief account of the steps taken by state governments for ameliorating the socio-economic condition of the Backward Classes.
4. Write notes on the following:
 - i. Kaka Kalelkar Commission
 - ii. The Mandal Commission
5. Are Backward Class movements mainly against the upper castes? Give examples of any two such movements.
6. What are the main patterns of social mobility among backward castes?

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The position enjoyed by women in the Rig-Vedic period deteriorated in the later-Vedic civilisation. A daughter began to be regarded as a curse. However, women were granted the freedom to participate in public life. They were denied the right of inheritance and of ownership of property (like the Shudras). Even the earnings of women became the property of their husbands and sons. However, women continued to have the *upanayana*, received education, and worked as teachers. Intermarriage between Brahmanas and Kshatriyas was not unknown between A.D. 700 and 1206.

During the Buddhist period women were not denied learning. They took active part in public life, but did not enjoy the right of vedic studies. The position of women really deteriorated in the Gupta age. Dowry emerged as an institution in this period. Widows could not marry again. They had to spend a life in penance and austerity. Women had no right to real property. But purdah system did not exist. Sati had become popular by the seventh century A.D. Some women did receive higher education even in this period. Lilavati and Khana were experts in arithmetic and astronomy.

The period between A.D. 1206 and 1761 witnessed further deterioration in the position of women. In this period female infanticide, child-marriage, purdah, jauhar, sati and slavery were the main social evils affecting the position of women. The birth of a daughter was considered bad luck. Giving freedom to women was thought of as the predecessor of doom. Women were largely uneducated and remained confined to their homes. Conservatism, superstition and belief in magic, sorcery and witchcraft were part of women's existence. Motherhood was respected. A woman's devotion to her husband, children and home was universally accepted as a positive value.

The reform movements and the national movement generated social consciousness among women. The All India Women's Conference was established in January 1927. This concentrated on educational and social work

among women. Mahatma Gandhi brought women out into public life. The women of the middle classes came forward to take employment in 1930s and 1940s. However, the British rulers did not want to do anything which could further women's position in Indian society. On matters of women's inheritance, marriage and the rights of married women, the law applied was a mix of ancient Hindu law and British law. For example, Hindu law nowhere did recognise the enforcement of a husband's conjugal rights; but when the principle of "restitution" was brought up, it was accepted, even though it was taken from Anglo-Saxon law.

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed several reforms regarding the position of women in Indian society. Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar started agitation for widow remarriage, and were successful in getting the Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act passed in 1856. In Bombay, a Widow Remarriage Association was formed in 1861. The Arya Samaj gave priority to this programme. Several acts were passed in the first half of this century regarding inheritance of property and marriage regulations. The most important acts in the post-Independence periods are: the Special Marriage Act of 1954, the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, and the Hindu Succession Act of 1956. The Government of India has taken up the problems of divorce, dowry, rape, etc. with a view to find solutions which will ensure equality of women with men.

Status of Women in the British Period

Sati, infanticide, slavery, child marriage, the prohibition of widow remarriage and the lack of women's rights were some of the social problems which attracted the attention of the British Raj and social reformers. In the beginning of nineteenth century, the practice of sati was confined to Hooghly, Nadia and Burdwan districts of Bengal, Ghazipur of Uttar Pradesh and Shahabad of Bihar. It was found in other parts of India, but only as a rare phenomenon. In southern India, it was practised in Ganjam, Masuli-

of slavery. Today, the institution exists in the form of bonded labour. It is known by different names in different states. The British policy of apparent and selective non-interference in social matters encouraged the institution of slavery and other institutions which supported this evil.

With the efforts of Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, the Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act was passed in 1856. In 1861, a Widow Marriage Association was formed. The Arya Samaj gave top priority to this programme. The following legislations have enhanced the status of Hindu women in matters of marriage, adoption and inheritance: (1) the Hindu Law of Inheritance (Amendment Act) of 1929, (2) the Hindu Women's Right to Property Act of 1937, (3) the Hindu Marriage Disability Removal Act of 1946, (4) the Special Marriage Act of 1954, (5) the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, (6) the Hindu Succession Act and the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act of 1956, (7) the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, (8) the Maternity Benefits Act, 1961, (9) the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, and (10) the Criminal Law Amendment, 1983.

The institution of bigamy has come to an end. Today both sexes have the right to a civil marriage. The age without parents' consent has been increased to 18 for girls and 21 for boys. Thus, monogamy, judicial separation, nullity and divorce are some of the salient features of the post-Independence era which put man and woman on an equal platform. Inheritance, adoption and divorce (even consent) have enhanced women's status in India. These reforms have a long history, and are outcome of the efforts of several reformists through various movements which they launched in the pre-Independence period.

Quest for Equality

Woman's quest for equality with man has become universal. It has given birth to women's movements and feminist activities and associations. All over the world, feminism has its origin in social structure. Several constraints,

such as inequalities between men and women and discrimination against women, have been age-old issues. For a long time women remained within the four walls of their households. Their dependence on menfolk was total. Educated women in particular and the poor ones in general realised the need for taking up employment outside the household. In recent years, the middle class women have taken up the issue of price-rise and have launched anti-price-rise movements in various cities of India. Within the household, women have demanded equality with men. What exists for men is demanded for women. This demand for equality with men, speaks of a notion of men's tyrannical hegemony.

Women have hardly any choice but to adopt an independent path for their upliftment. They want to have equality within the framework of the existing highly rigid patriarchal society. Further, women want to have for themselves the same strategies of change which menfolk have had over the centuries. But why do women want to follow in the footsteps of men? Our experience shows that even earning women give their earnings to their mothers-in-law and husbands, rather than spending the same independently. This again speaks of the deep-rooted patriarchal normative orientation. However, this does not mean that women have always followed men in all respects in their households. Women participated in India's national movement for freedom from British rule. Many of them worked with Gandhiji in the pre-Independence period. Today women's organisations, woman social workers and politicians have taken up the issues of price-rise, dowry, rape, exploitation, etc. to seek equal status with men and a dignified life. Women have demanded their share of jobs in the police and other such services. Women's organisations have created a sense of consciousness for gender equality, particularly in the urban areas.

Consequent upon these urgent social problems connected with women, International Women's Day, International Women's Year, Conferences and Seminars on women, and women's studies have been instituted in a big way late

activities, and yet they are more enslaved to their menfolk. Similarly to look at women in terms of literate versus illiterate, rich versus poor, and rural versus urban would not give a proper understanding of women's plight in today's India. Women, in fact, cannot be understood independent of men. The family alone has not been enslaving women. The ethos of society has been such that women have been treated rather shabbily. Leon Trotsky once remarked: "there are no limits to masculine egotism. In order to understand the world we must look at it through the eyes of women."

Today the emphasis in women's studies is not on the status of women, their degradation, social customs, the role of women in the family, community and tradition, but it has shifted to education, economic and legal status of women, political participation, etc. Nowadays, instead of studying their attitudes, roles and status, the causes of women's subordination, work participation, women in movements, patriarchal structure and women in relation to socio-economic and political structure are being taken up as crucial issues concerning women. Age and sex are not simply biological phenomena; they are social and cultural variables too, and in some societies these are considered the basis of distribution of rewards and privileges.

It is necessary to have "empathy" to study the position of women for a scientific understanding of their problems, the device of "role-taking" is adopted. This means placing oneself in the position of women rather than simply expressing sympathy with them. Women working within their own households as dependent members, children and old men by and large constitute a common category against the active and earning male members. Such a situation is found in India where a great deal of concern has been expressed for familial bonds, collective responsibilities and emotional ties for kinship relations.

Women's Struggle Against Exploitation and Oppression

In recent years, a number of women's movements

have emerged; characterised by acting, theorising and mobilising. Are these movements class struggles or are they emancipation movements? Another related question is: how should one link the struggle for the liberation of the working class with that for the emancipation of women? The women's movement, like the students' movement so far, is more or less middle-class oriented. The systems of sexism and male chauvinism are more or less universal in all organisations. Thus, there is a close connection between male dominance and patriarchy in the family and capitalist exploitation in the larger society.

The women's movement is organised by white-collar middle class women and social workers from among upper and upper middle class non-working women. Feminist publications such as *Manushi*, *Bayja*, *Mahila Andolan Patrika*, *Feminist Network* and several other publications are run by women's organisations managed by urban middle and upper middle class women. Women's conferences and seminars in Delhi, Bombay and Pune have now become a regular means of mobilising working women in particular to achieve equality with men. Intra-household discrimination, women's economic status, their work situations, occupational patterns, etc. have become focal themes of these seminars. It has been mentioned in the discussions held in these seminars that women in India receive less consideration and money than is required to meet their needs and responsibilities within the household and less than is their right. One view is that there is economic basis for sexual discrimination within the family. Women can be compared to some extent with the urban proletariat and the poor peasant in terms of their exploitation. Women do a lot of work at home which they are not paid for. Even working women do not enjoy independent status as they are made to carry the burden of household work actually to be done by their in-laws and husbands.

Some women protagonists have mentioned four major forms of the struggle of women for greater control over their lives. These are: (1) women have organised (through mass move-

their immense contribution to the national cause. They are generally found in the unorganised sector; hence their oppression and exploitation. Technological advancement has affected women adversely as they have now less control over resources within the family and other sectors of their employment. Advancement in the fields of agriculture, dairy development, fisheries and domestic technology has reduced the economic authority and the general status of women. Men have become less dependent upon women even in domestic affairs. The gap between men and women has further widened. The major areas of hiatus between men and women are, for example, in literacy, education and training, women's employment, female mortality, health care and medical services. Female mortality is higher than male mortality. Women are lagging behind men in these areas because of India's social and cultural heritage and strong tradition of patriarchy and male-domination.

Conclusion

The problem is due to unequal access of men and women to society's resources and its distributive processes. Technological devices, which could have helped women in many ways, have also been adopted by men to their advantage. Can men alone be blamed for these gender-based inequalities? It has been observed that it is women who obstruct the path of other women even more than men do; as is the case with mothers-in-law and colleagues at work. All women are not equally exploited or oppressed. Therefore, there is a need to study women as

unmarried girls, young wives, mothers, old women, and working and non-working women. Such a scheme of study will provide a comparative picture of the dimensions of women's problems as it covers ramifications and variations in the status of women. Interaction between women in different settings may also provide useful clues for our understanding of the problem.

Women's struggle for emancipation from social and cultural bondage has been a historical fact in the Indian context. Women have also fought for their right to vote and also against their oppression and exploitation in all aspects of their existence. Women's struggles have challenged the existing system which has made them socially, culturally, economically, and even politically, crippled. To seek "gender justice" for them (and also for men) it would be proper to understand India's social formation, its layers and levels (including caste and class), male-female images and reality, various views of a woman's place in the family and at the place of work, and the congruence between technological advancement and patriarchy. Scientific and technological devices have not challenged the traditional mechanisms of women's oppression and exploitation. The man-woman relationship continues to be the dominating-dominated relationship. One finds, even today, a close tie-up between caste, class and man-woman relationship. However, the quest for equality with men has been strongly expressed in recent years. It has made some tangible impact in metropolitan cities and big towns. There is a need for a lot more to be done in this social field.

EXERCISES

1. Give a brief account of the position of women in ancient India.
2. Bring out the factors which led to the deterioration of the position of women in medieval India.
3. Explain the main problems of women in India during the British rule.
4. What do you understand by women's quest for equality with men?
5. Is the family the field of women's oppression?
6. Highlight the role played by legislation in enhancing women's position in Indian society.
7. In what way have women's organisations and social movements contributed to elevation of the status of women?

Chapter XII

Dowry System

Introduction

Dowry was initially an institution in which gifts and presents were given to a girl at the time of her marriage when she was required to leave her parents' home and join her husband's household. But unfortunately it has become a crude institution resulting in female infanticide, suicide, bride-burning and other indignities and cruelties. The dowry problem has become a serious social problem among the upper castes and middle classes in towns and villages. The rules of marriage, namely, caste endogamy and clan exogamy and *anuloma* (hypergamy) and *pratiloma* (hypogamy) have been misinterpreted and misused for maintaining the dowry system. These rules restrict the choice of mate-selection. They ensure that marriage takes place within one's caste and outside one's clan.

Further, a girl should be married to a boy who belongs to a family with a status higher than that of her family. This practice of marriage alliance is known as hypergamy or *anuloma*. When a girl is married to a boy whose family status is lower than that of the girl's, it is known as hypogamy or *pratiloma*. Thus, *anuloma* has restricted choice and created a desire to give away a girl through marriage to a superior family. A boy becomes a more valued object than a girl. The net result, therefore, is dowry; the giving of material goods and cash to the parents of the boy at the time of fixing the marriage, at the performance of marriage and even afterwards on several other occasions. This practice has become a serious social problem.

The Magnitude of the Problem

In India, and particularly in Delhi, dowry murders and suicides have become a matter of great concern. In Delhi alone, a bride is burnt to death every twelve hours. A total of 162 cases of burning of women were reported in Delhi between April 1, 1983 and June 30, 1983. This is an all-time high number of such incidents, and dowry is the most prominent cause of such a phenomenon. The problem of dowry is experienced by all sections of Indian society, but particularly by the educated middle classes engaged in salaried jobs and trade and commerce. Women's organisations, voluntary associations, the intelligentsia and planners have expressed their serious concern for finding legal and reformative remedies to curb the menace of this social evil.

Dowry is not a "gift", a "return gift", an "exchange" or a reciprocal gesture. It is considered more as an expenditure on the marriage of a girl, which parents are required to incur per force. Parents of a boy of marriageable age, and with the qualifications that the parents of a girl are looking for, demand a dowry according to what they think is the "value" of their son. There are no references to dowry (as we know it today) in the sanskritic texts. However, there are references to bride-price in the context of the traditional forms of marriage. There are certainly references to ornaments given to the bride. The Smritis also do not mention dowry. Dowry is a phenomenon which emerged in the medieval period. The Rajput princes, thikanedars and jagirdars gave away gifts to their daughters

which is entirely dependent upon the good qualities of the groom and his parents.

The giving of gifts and help to a daughter was quite a normal activity in ancient India. It was voluntary and not demanded. However, in medieval India, Mughal rulers and *nawabs* demanded high dowries. The Rajput kings gave dowries to ensure that their daughters lived comfortably after their marriage. Dowry was demanded rather than voluntarily offered. However, the system was confined to the ruling classes, Rajputs and Brahmins. The lower castes had, on the contrary, a system of bride-price. Among the lower castes female member was considered an asset of a family; useful for agricultural labour and other traditional occupations. Hence the question of dowry did not arise. In the wake of sanskritisation, the lower castes imitated the practice of dowry. Even the poor borrowed money to give dowry. The poor Rajputs in Rajputana started killing newly born female children. Bengal also had this evil of dowry in a pronounced form because of the institution of hypergamy.

Social Structure, Social Change and Dowry

The nationalist and social reform leaders condemned the institution of dowry. Mahatma Gandhi writes: "Any young man who makes dowry a condition for marriage discredits his education and his country and dishonours ... womanhood. Young men who soil their fingers with such ill-gotten gold should be excommunicated from society". However, these efforts did not minimise the evil to any noticeable extent. The growth of education, salaried employment, migration to cities and towns and scientific and industrial advancements not only increased the incidence of dowry but also changed its dimension and magnitude. Educated boys, with administrative and professional jobs, became the most prized prospective husbands. Those who worked in towns and cities were preferred; as life was more comfortable in cities than in villages. Scooters, cars, radios, televisions, videos, refrigerators, furniture, electrical appliances and household

equipments have become a part of the dowry package among the upper sections of society.

The Hindu Succession Act of 1956 provides girls with the legal right to a share in the parental property; but rarely do girls demand their share nor are they given it. The law is almost redundant. The Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 has utterly failed to check the growing menace of dowry. The girl does not make a claim for her share in parental property, but the parents spend a lot on her marriage. The Act of 1961 prohibits dowry. Despite this the practice of dowry is widespread. It has even spread to the communities, castes and regions which were hitherto unaffected.

Dowry varies from caste to caste and from region to region. It varies depending on urban, rural and family background. It is a socio-structural phenomenon. Variations in social structure, in terms of caste, class, ethnicity, religion, region and culture, result in observable variations of the system of dowry. There is, however, a clear difference between the bride-givers and bride-takers because of the rules of marriage practised in most parts of India. The communities in which bride-price exists or where patriliney is weak, dowry has not become a social problem. One who is a bride-giver remains socially inferior to the bride-taker throughout his life, and, in fact, for several generations to come. It is not that the bride-giver gives dowry only once, at the time of marriage, but it is a continuous process. The bride receives gifts and presents throughout her life. The quality and amount of these gifts and presents depend upon the status and economic position of the bride-giving family.

Dowry is generally given to the parents of the groom; but in recent years, particularly in the urban areas, dowry is claimed as a right by the couple, particularly those items which are specifically meant for them and their newly established household. Some parents give dowry in the name of their daughters, fearing its use by the parents of the groom. Several cases of tension and dishar-

mony have come up because of such steps by the bride-givers.

The problem of dowry is not acute in matrilineal societies and in societies which are guided by the prescription of cross-cousin marriages. Both are found in south India, and therefore, the problem of dowry is less acute there compared to in north India. The Nayars, Tiyyars and the Nangudi Vellalars are traditionally matrilineal societies in south India. The Nayars of Kerala pay neither bride-price nor give dowry. The Nayars are a matrilineal, matrilocal society with an institution of visiting husbands. The visiting husband occasionally offers nominal gifts, as a token of his love and affection. The Tiyyars have the system of paternal cross-cousin marriage, that is, the girl is married to her father's sister's son. The bride-taker gives some gifts to the bride. In case the girl is married in violation of this rule, the bride's family is required to pay a fine. The Nangudi Vellalars also have the same pattern of marriage as that of the Tiyyars. A girl is given a patch of land as a gift at the time of her marriage. These are not really variations of dowry. Matriliney and rules of marriage in south India have not allowed asymmetrical relations to develop between the bride-givers and bride-takers, as we notice in north India.

ideology, and a value-system which guarantees a place of honour to women and their parents. Young men of marriageable age do not become marketable commodities sold by their parents to the parents of brides in return for dowry. Egalitarian values are the only substitute for caste-based hypergamous marriages. Inter-caste marriages should be encouraged. Arranged marriages with demands of dowry must go.

The preventive and short-term devices would include immediate action when incidents of dowry deaths, harassment and humiliation occur. The victims of dowry should be provided legal and social protection. The television, radio and newspapers should highlight such incidents with all seriousness to curb the menace in future. Street corner plays should depict such incidents as serious matters of life and not as a source of entertainment. Political leaders, government officials, businessmen and others must not be allowed either to take or give dowry in any form.

not even in the form of gifts and presents. It has become a vicious evil. A man who gives dowry to his daughter plans to take more dowry for his son than he has given for his daughter. If such a thing continues, there will be no end to this social evil. Hence, the measures suggested above are the only way out to reduce the magnitude of the problem.

Conclusion

Dowry has become a serious problem, particularly among those sections of society who are constrained to give dowry but do not have adequate resources for savings for the dowry. These are generally the salaried groups who have fixed income. We have discussed problems arising out of dowry and efforts being made to cope with this social evil. Despite all the efforts, the solution to this problem does not seem to be there in the near future.

EXERCISES

1. Define the institution of dowry.
2. Discuss the magnitude of the problem as it exists in present day India.
3. Bring out the relationship between social structure, social change and dowry.
4. Explain the reasons which have led to the emergence of and the persistence of dowry.
5. Explain the following:
 - i. Hypergamy
 - ii. Stridhanam
 - iii. Bride-price
 - iv. Education and dowry.
6. Highlight the role of legislation in curbing the problem of dowry.

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Chapter XIII

Social Deviance

Introduction

The behaviour of man which does not conform to accepted norms is called social deviance. There is no society which can claim a complete conformity to its norms. Also, there is no society where complete violation of norms or normlessness is found. Crime is found in all societies of all types. Every society is confronted with the problems of crime, delinquency, prostitution, etc. However, what may be considered a social deviance in one society may be considered normal or not-so-much a deviant activity in another society. Violation of norms related to caste, family, marriage, etc. was considered a deviant activity in the past and it invited punishment and ostracisation. However, today such violations do not evoke serious punishment and criticism. Thus, deviance is a relative phenomenon, and gets its form in terms of space and time.

act which amounts to violation of accepted social norms is not a crime. An act of self-defence also may not be treated as a crime. A criminal act resulting from emotional stress makes a person less culpable than the premeditated act. But ignorance cannot always be an excuse. Thus, the act and the motivation are both important considerations in determining whether an act is a crime. Since children and insane persons are generally not in a position to premeditate criminal acts, they are excluded from the category of criminals. There are two types of crimes: (1) felonies; and (2) misdemeanors. Felonies are ordinary crimes such as violation of traffic rules, petty thefts, creating nuisance in public places, etc. Misdemeanors refer to serious offenses such as murder, dacoity, rape, smuggling, etc.

Sociologically speaking, non-conformity is an important yardstick of criminal behaviour. Conformity refers to behaviour in accordance with

gambling, the use of narcotic drugs, vagrancy, etc. These are considered vices, but their performance or exhibition in public may become crime.

A sociologicistic view of crime is suggested by Emile Durkheim. According to Durkheim, a differential rate of crime reflects differential degrees of social cohesion and the corresponding social control. The breakdown of social cohesion frees the individual from the pressure of public opinion and of the informal social control which, in more solitary groups, operate to secure conformity to the norms of conventional behaviour.

Explanation of Crime

There are two types of explanations of crime: (1) "mechanistic", or "situational", and (2) historical or genetic. The first explanation refers to geographical, climatic and biological factors in crime. For example, crimes against persons are more prevalent in warm climates and crimes against property are more numerous in cold areas. Crime is caused either by great wealth or great poverty. Thus, crime is committed because of the complexity of an ill-adjusted economic system.

People also commit crime because they want to lead a luxurious life which they cannot afford to have without committing crimes against property. Social and ecological settings also affect the individual's need to commit crime. There are some delinquency prone areas. There are village and city gangs of offenders. The criminologist Sutherland talks of the "differential association" theory of crime; that is, learning about criminality by coming in contact with criminal behaviour patterns.

The genetic explanation states that criminal behaviour is learned, particularly by interaction with other persons. The learning includes: (1) techniques of committing crime; and (2) the specific direction of motives, drives, rationalisations and attitudes. Differential associations may vary in frequency, duration, priority, and intensity. There is a theory known as a "systematic theory" of crime. Gangs of criminals operate in specific areas. Such gangs have organi-

sational structures, leaders and specific norms of conduct. Maladjustment with the existing norms and available means is the basis of criminal behaviour. Crime is, in fact, a socially and legally undesirable behaviour, and hence invites punishment. Whatever may be the situations in which a person indulges in criminal acts, there is never one, single cause; as crime is a complex behaviour pattern, and is caused by a multiplicity of factors.

Classification of Criminals

A number of classifications of criminals are available. The famous Italian criminologist, Lombroso, gives a fivefold classification: (1) the born criminal; (2) the insane criminal; (3) the criminal by passion; (4) the habitual criminal; and (5) the occasional criminal. Recent researches show that heredity and insanity or even passion are not causes of crime because they have not stood the test of scientific rigour. The habitual and the occasional types refer to frequency of crime rather than its causes.

According to another classification, criminals are classed as murderers, violent criminals, criminals lacking in probity and lascivious (lustful) criminals. Even this classification is based on an impressionistic analysis rather than on facts. Some others have classified criminals as professionals, casual and habitual.

Since crime is a social phenomenon, criminals should be classified in terms of their orientation and in accordance with the values and cultural definitions in the social world in which they live. There are two types of criminals from the sociological point of view: (1) the "social criminal"; and (2) the "individualised criminal". The first refers to a general category supported by general culture. The second refers to those who commit crime for their diverse personal and private ends. Political crime and crime by terrorist organisations can be included in the first category. Society has some pre-ordained goals to be realised by its members and some means or norms to be followed for realising the goals. Robert K.

Merton calls any lack of correspondence between the two a situation of anomie.

According to Merton, a situation of deviation arises when there is a lack of fit between culturally accepted goals and institutionalised means of attaining them. The sociological dimension of crime is stated by Durkheim as follows: "Crime is a social fact and human act. Crime is both normal and functional. No society can be completely exempted from it. Crime is one of the prices we pay for freedom"

The Concept of Delinquency

There is a lack of unanimity on the correct definition of juvenile delinquency. It has both legal and sociological dimensions. In 1960, the second United Nations Congress on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders recommended: (1) that the meaning of the term juvenile delinquency should be restricted as far as possible to violations of the criminal law, and (2) that a situation should not be created where society penalises the small irregularities or mal-adjusted behaviour of minors, when it would not prosecute adults for the same irregularities or behaviour. A delinquent child is one who deserts his home, who is habitually disobedient or is beyond the control of his parents, who violates the law of the land, or who does not abide by the rules which he is required to follow.

It is stated that human ecology or institutions have an impact upon the individual, and he becomes a delinquent due to its stresses and strains. The factory areas, for example, are delinquency prone. Some areas, in fact, become ganglands. Frederic Thrasher found 1,313 delinquent gangs in Chicago. Many of these gangs were training schools for criminals. Gangs are even formed for adventurous recreation.

Can delinquency be measured? Since it is not defined in any one way and is subjectively interpreted, it is not easy to make a full measurement of the extent and intensity of the phenomenon of delinquency.

The best known studies of delinquency are William F. Whyte's *Street Corner Society* and A.K. Cohen's *Delinquent Boys*. Whyte brings out with anthropological insight the nature and structure of delinquent gangs. Cohen rejects the concept of "delinquency area" because the slum areas have a vast and ramifying network of informal associations. Systematic delinquent behaviour is found primarily among lower economic groups. Delinquency is fundamentally related to socio-economic conditions of individuals and groups.

Crime in India

The factors influencing the adjustment process have been highlighted in explaining crime. Indian society has its own unique character, and the phenomenon of crime needs to be seen in terms of its peculiar nature. To understand juvenile delinquency, one must analyse the socialisation process, peer group influence, and the structure of delinquent gangs. The causal variables in delinquency are age, sex and status of the family.

Socialisation and crime are correlated. A man learns both positive and negative roles as a member of a given society. Dysfunctional roles are imbibed by those members who are subjected to tension, conflict, dissension and defection rather than peace, harmony, cooperation and stability. Attitudes towards one's own life and towards those of others are determined by these factors in the process of socialisation. Power has also become a source of crime for the privileged sections of society. There is a tendency among powerful persons to abuse their influence and authority. White-collar crime is a phenomenon found among the educated people engaged in trade, professions and government services.

The Police Research and Development Bureau has reported murder, homicide, adulteration of medicines, abduction, rape, dacoity, loot, burglary, theft, rioting, forgery, embezzlement and breach of trust as the major criminal activities. In 1981-82, about 85 per cent of crimes were related to burglary, dacoity and thievery. A number of crimes also remain unreported in the police records, particularly in the rural areas. Thus, crime in India is mainly against property. This does not mean that all criminals are necessarily at the bottom of social and economic hierarchies. Economic offences and crimes are committed more often by the economically well off and well-placed people in society. Tax evasion, smuggling and bribery are some of the common crimes committed by members belonging to the upper sections of society.

Delinquency in India

The Children's Act, 1960, defines a delinquent child as one who has been found to have committed an offence. A child is defined as a boy under the age of 16 years, and a girl under 18. The word "offence" means any act of omission made punishable under the law in force at a given time. There are juvenile courts to deal with delinquent children. Child welfare boards deal with neglected and uncontrollable children. In India, even if children commit serious offences like the ones committed by adult criminals, they are dealt by the juvenile courts. This is in consonance with the

recommendation of U.N.O. in regard to social defence.

According to police records in 1971, there were 1,03,419 juvenile delinquents. Mainly male children were involved. Violence was not pronounced, but the number of murders was quite noticeable. Drinking, gambling, and theft were found as the major deviant activities. Of the delinquents, 70 per cent lived with their parents, and the remaining 30 per cent either lived with their guardians or were homeless. More than 80 per cent of the total number of delinquents were in the lower income group. Upper and upper-middle class children were few and also escaped arrests. More than 53 per cent of them were illiterate, 38 per cent had studied below primary, and only 2 per cent were matriculates. Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh had the maximum rates of delinquency.

The Government of India has adopted a therapeutic approach to the problem of juvenile delinquency. Juvenile courts, the Apprentices Act, 1850, the Reformatory Schools Act, 1897, the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1898 and of 1973, the Children's Acts passed by the states since the 1920s, constitutional provisions, the Children's Act of 1960, psychiatric clinics, educational and recreational programmes, and community programmes are some of the major steps undertaken by the government of India in its efforts to treat juvenile delinquents as amateur offenders who had fallen into bad company or who lived in incongenial homes or neighbourhoods.

Children indulge in delinquency for recreational and preservative reasons. Pleasure-seeking and survival are their main objectives. Their pleasure-seeking objective compels them to commit economic offences; and their survival-oriented objective forces them to indulge in aggressive and retributive activities. Smoking, homosexuality, at times heterosexual relations, alcoholism, gambling and drug-addiction are some of the well-known activities noted by the criminologist K.S. Shukla. Various experts have reported that gangs form the organisational basis of juvenile delinquency.

Reformative Measures

Reforms are required at three levels: (1) police, (2) prisons, and (3) rehabilitation. There is a dire need to improve the capabilities of the police and prison personnel to correctly understand and treat criminals, prisoners and detainees. Instead of a punitive administration, what we require today is a correctional administration. Improved facilities for food, housing, health and recreation should be made available to prisoners. A prison can be treated as a "country-club" rather than a dark cell. A system of trusteeship and self-government is a philosophy and a technique of dealing with prisoners which can bring about their re-socialisation.

Probation

Probation, as a correctional method, has been practised in India for a long time now. An offender is put on trial under the supervision of a probation officer. Imposition of punishment is suspended because there is less stigma attached to a suspended sentence. An offender is given time to prove that he could mend his ways. Supervision is of a friendly nature. It is a method of bailing out the prisoners. Probation is an enlightened attempt to cope with crime in some of its aspects. It affords the offender another chance to improve, to continue to live a life that meet with the approval of society. It averts the stigma of a prison sentence.

legitimised, whereas in others it is prohibited, both legally and morally. It involves a high degree of sexual promiscuity that fulfils no publicly recognised societal goal. Prostitution may be defined as "engaging in a primary contact in a secondary relationship." Promiscuity means willingly indulging in sexual contact with numerous persons, and even with strangers. A prostitute sells her sexual favours without any emotional attachment but for economic gain.

Geoffery May, in the Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, defines prostitution as "characterised by three elements: (1) payment, usually involving the passing of money, although gifts or pleasures may constitute equivalent consideration; (2) promiscuity, with the possible exercise of choice; and (3) emotional indifference, which may be inferred from payment and promiscuity." The sexual relation between the buyer and seller is illegitimate, ephemeral and condemned.

The causes of prostitution may be varied, but psychological and sociological factors are important reasons for prostitution. Sex is used for various ulterior purposes; as is the case when pretty girls are employed in stores and charity drives, and used in advertisements. These factors lead to promiscuous sexual relations. Kinsey points out some aspects of prostitution that are useful for certain male individuals. However, this does not mean an advocacy of promotion of this age-old institution. It is found both in unorganised and organised forms. Recently, prostitutes have even formed unions in some big cities and towns.

Prostitution in India

It is difficult to find an exact estimate of the incidence of prostitution in India because it is still considered a sin to visit a brothel. There are at least three types of prostitutes: (1) common prostitutes, working openly in brothels; (2) private prostitutes, mistresses or keeps of one man, who work as singers, dancers and *naikins*; and (3) clandestine prostitutes, who work in secret, and maintain their respectability and social position. Thus, prostitution is a complex phenomenon. It

is directly not visible.

A study of 425 prostitutes was conducted by S.D. Punekar and Kamla Rao in the city of Bombay. The findings of this study are quite educative and useful. One-third of the common prostitutes were *devadasis*. Backward communities from rural areas sent girls to the city for prostitution. There are reports that some persons allure poor, young rural girls to towns and cities with the promise of getting them a job or of getting them married. In fact, they sell them to brothel-keepers either directly or through middlemen. Prostitution is ultimately adopted by them as a profession though they do not intend it to be the source of their livelihood. Devadasis pursue prostitution as a profession. They claim to have a right to prostitute. These devadasis may attract others to or involve others in prostitution.

In cities like Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi there are prostitutes from all parts of the country. Foreigners too are said to be a part of this network. Punekar and Rao's study shows that more than half of the prostitutes are from the state of Karnataka, particularly from the Bijapur, South Kanara and Belgaum districts. Eighty-six per cent are Hindus, and half of these are Harijans. Ten per cent of them are literate, and are of mentally average calibre. A large majority of them are from rural areas, and belong to poor peasant families. The common prostitutes (the lowest class of prostitutes) are from the lowest social and economic strata. However, it cannot be said that poverty is the most important cause for prostitution.

There are some prostitutes who were indifferently brought up by their parents. Defective socialisation, destitution, carelessness of parents and lack of love and affection have been reported as the main causes of prostitution. Out of the non-devadasis, two-thirds are married. They are the ones who became widows at an early age. There are also run-away wives. Among the married ones, unhappy married life is mainly responsible. The causes of unhappiness included ill-treatment, drunkenness and unfaithfulness of

- i. Probation
- ii. Parole
8. Discuss the nature and causes of prostitution. How far have economic factors been responsible for prostitution in India?

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gainful employment. There is a lot of unproductive labour in India. There is also a lack of capital intensive production. Fifty per cent of the net domestic product comes from agriculture and allied economic activities. Only 10 per cent comes from organised industry.

Is India over populated? The answer is both yes and no. It is yes because there is a great deal of unemployment and under-employment in India. A sizeable section is under the poverty line. A large number of people do not even get their barest needs fulfilled. There are limited resources and numerous aspirants for them. However, the richer classes and groups do not suffer because of India's over-population. They get labour at very low wage rates, and derive even more surpluses. These surpluses are not invested for labour-intensive economic activities.

India is the second largest country in terms of population; but it also has the second largest trained and technically qualified man-power resources in the world. The developed countries of the world get the maximum advantage of this scientific manpower which India has been producing. Therefore, there is a "no" to the question of over-population. India has not yet found an effective mechanism of striking a proper balance between population growth rate and its economic and social development.

Population and Economic Development

Population and development are correlated. It is stated that the size of population, rate of growth and its composition and geographical distribution are important factors in determining the requirements of infrastructure such as education, housing, health services, food supply, etc. Productive health capacity is also determined by the size and growth rate of population. Thus, to make plans for development for the present as well as for the future, there is a need to understand the structure and growth of population in a given country. A comparison of the developing regions and the more developed regions shows that the birth rate has been high in both categories, but the difference is still quite significant.

The following table shows the facts in this context.

TABLE 14.1
Birth Rates, Death Rates and the Rates of Natural Increase
for the Developing and the More Developed Regions of the
World, 1900-1970
(Rates per 1,000 population)

Period	Developing Regions			More Developed Regions		
	Birth rate	Death rate	Rate of natural increase	Birth rate	Death rate	Rate of natural increase
1900-1950	41	32	9	26	18	8
1950-1960	43	22	21	22	10	12
1960-1970	41	17	24	20	9	11

Source: United Nations, the World Population Situation in 1970 (1971).

The developing countries are faced with contradictions in regard to population growth and economic and social development. For example, the birth rate has been static from 1900 to 1970, and the death rate has declined considerably because of the developments in scientific and economic fields. Thus the increase in the population has been phenomenal; almost three times from 1900 to 1970. The increase in the population of the developed countries has been just nominal. The birth rate has also declined to the extent of nearly 20 per cent. This clearly shows that along with scientific, technological and educational factors, population is a very important variable in economic development.

Several studies in developing countries have examined correlations between fertility levels in these countries and their social and economic development. These studies indicate that "improving economic and social conditions are not likely to have much impact in bringing down

buted to the evolution of economic ideas and thinking on population. These developments took place between the late fifteenth and the late eighteenth centuries. Mercantilism was the dominant school of this period. Population increase was encouraged through large families, early marriage and immigration. It was not a scientific theory of population. This school had two tenets: (1) increase in national wealth by production and export of goods, and (2) rivalry among nations. A sizeable population was required for warfare. Inflation and human exploitation were its two natural consequences. Thus, mercantilism was a policy for obtaining economic and political gains. Because of the over-emphasis on population increase, some people foresaw a scarcity of the means of subsistence, they suggested some checks to population growth.

Malthusian Theory of Population

Malthus was the first to develop a consistent and comprehensive theory of population in relation to economic conditions. His first essay on population was: "An Essay on the Principle of Population", published in 1798. Malthus regarded the social institutions of his times as natural and inevitable. He asserted that the pressure of want, the cause of poverty, and the unequal distribution of property were not related to forms of government. He formulated the principle that man could increase his subsistence only in arithmetical progression whereas his numbers tended to increase in geometrical progression. "Population always tended towards the limits set by subsistence and was contained within those limits by the operation of positive and preventive checks". In the revised version of this essay, Malthus made the following propositions:

- (1) Population is necessarily limited by the means of subsistence.
- (2) Population invariably increases where the means of subsistence increase, unless prevented by some very powerful and obvious checks.
- (3) These and other checks are all resolvable into moral restraint, "vice", and "misery"

Malthus drew two conclusions: (1) with natural increase, population tends to double itself every 25 years, thus increasing in a geometrical progression; and (2) under the most favourable conditions, agricultural production increases each 25 years by an equal quantity, in an arithmetical progression. In general, Malthus assumes diminishing returns from land. There are other checks which keep population down to the level of subsistence. These checks are the preventive and the positive checks. The preventive checks are voluntary in nature, and include moral restraint, implying deferring of marriage, and "vice". The positive checks include epidemics, wars, plague and famine, all manifestations of "misery". These checks have operated in all countries with some variations. Only in a few cases has population increased beyond the means of subsistence.

Neo-classical Theories

In the neo-classical period two schools of thought dominated: (1) the classical school of political economy, and (2) the Socialists and the Marxists. They were concerned with the causes and consequences of population changes, particularly with a view to discover the laws related to production, wages, interest, rents and profits. The scholars of this period argued that population growth tended to depress wages and create poverty. J.S. Mill thought that population control, through the flow of goods and services in a given country, would bring down the population pressure. Circumstances checked the growth of population. Technological progress also brought down the population pressure.

The natural or biological theory is that fertility decreases with the increase in density of population. This is known as the theory of "optimum" population. M.T. Sadler argued: "The fecundity of human beings under similar circumstances varied inversely as their numbers increase on a given space." By fecundity he meant the physiological capacity to conceive and bear living children. "A population cannot have high fertility without being highly be

TABLE 14.2
Growth of Population in India, 1891-1981
(Figures in millions)

Year	Total population	Decennial increase during the decade	Decennial growth rate during the decade (per cent)
1891	235.9	—	—
1901	238.4	2.4	1.0
1911	252.0	13.7	5.7
1921	251.3	-0.8	-0.3
1931	279.0	27.7	11.0
1941	318.7	39.7	14.2
1951	361.1	42.4	11.3
1961	439.2	78.1	21.6
1971	548.2	108.9	24.8
1981	683.8	135.6	24.8

TABLE 14.3
Percentage and Growth Rate of Urban and Rural Population

Year	Percentage of distribution		Decadal growth rate	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
1901	89.2	10.8	—	—
1911	89.7	10.3	6.4	0.3
1921	88.8	11.2	-1.3	8.3
1931	88.0	12.0	9.9	19.1
1941	86.1	13.9	11.8	31.9
1951	82.7	17.3	8.9	41.4
1961	82.0	18.0	20.6	26.4
1971	80.1	19.9	21.8	37.8
1981	76.3	23.7	19.0	46.0

Hindus account for 82.7 per cent of the total population, and Muslims for 11.2 per cent. Christians are the third major group. Sikhs are mainly concentrated in the Punjab. (Jains and Buddhists as social groups are more like Hindus.) the census provides details based on age, sex, marital status, literacy, occupation, etc.

The sex composition of India's population shows that there are fewer females than males. The 1981 census indicates a slight change in this trend. (See Table 14.4).

TABLE 14.4
Sex Ratio (females per thousand males)

Census year	Population (in millions)		Sex ratio
	Males	Females	
1901	120.8	117.4	972
1911	128.4	123.7	964
1921	128.5	122.8	955
1931	142.9	135.8	950
1941	163.7	154.7	945
1951	185.5	175.6	946
1961	226.3	212.9	941
1971	284.0	264.1	930
1981	353.3	330.5	935

Like the male-female ratio, the age structure of India's population has remained almost stable during the last six decades. The reason is that natural calamities and man-made problems like wars have not affected India's population on any large scale. Nearly 40 per cent of India's popu-

have been accepted; particularly by the educated white-collar groups. Awareness of the problem of over-population is greater among people with higher education and white-collar employment.

EXERCISES

1. Bring out the relationship between India's population problem and its economic development.
2. Is India over-populated? Discuss.
3. Explain the Malthusian theory of population. Critically examine its relevance for understanding the problem of over-population.
4. Briefly discuss the neo-classical theories of population. How far are they an improvement on the Malthusian theory?
5. Write an essay on India's population structure.
6. Analyse India's national Population Policy. Why has it not been as successful in checking population growth as was envisaged by the planners?

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gistered particularly by those who are adversely affected by processes of social change.

Kingsley Davis has listed several questions in regard to the understanding of social change. What is the direction of social change? What is the rate of social change? What is the *source* of social change? What is the *cause* of social change? Is the cause of social change overwhelmingly deterministic in nature? Can social change be regulated to the desired direction?

All the classical theories of society have grappled with these questions related to social change. Peter L. Berger and Brigitte Berger state that "the experience of social change is at the very core of sociology as a discipline.... sociology developed as an intellectual response to catalysmic social change. The French Revolution, the Civil War in America, the Industrial Revolution in Britain and the freedom struggle in India, are examples of rapid transformations of society.

Sociology and the Study of Social Change

Sociology as a discipline would see changes in society, its social groupings, institutions, behaviour patterns, etc. Two tendencies can be ascertained in such situations of upheaval and transformation: (1) to contain the changes within certain limits; and (2) to channellize them in a desired fashion. The first has been labelled a conservative perspective, whereas the second is called progressive or radical. Berger and Berger observe that "in either case, social change presents itself as a problem in a double sense: social change is an intellectual problem in that it is a challenge to understanding; social change is also a political problem in that it demands practical actions" Thus, social change is both an ideology and praxis. There is a need to strike a balance between the two. Max Weber treats the two as distinct from each other, whereas Karl Marx believes in the unity of theory and practice.

August Comte, who is known as the father of sociology, predicted the direction that change would take in future. The idea of progress was basic to his evolutionary perspective. He makes a

reference to laws of history. The three stages of evolution of society are theological, metaphysical and scientific. In Comte's view, sociology can be understood as a kind of religion of progress, with the sociologist playing the role of priest. Comte's emphasis is on scientific reason and progress. Herbert Spencer was another evolutionary-positivist thinker of the early period. Spencer applied the Darwinian notions about the dynamics of evolution to society and its changes. "As in the biological sphere, social change too is dominated by the conflicts and adaptations that result in 'natural selection'. The purpose of evolution, biological or social, is the survival of the fittest." Karl Marx explains social change in terms of the varying constellations of class relationships. Both Spencer and Marx emphasise that conflict and struggle are the forces of history. However, Marx refers to the concept of "false consciousness"—the consciousness of people who are unaware of their real social position in society (relations of production). Marx also predicts the future with a more specific emphasis. He visualises the emergence of a capitalist society, class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and the overthrow of the capitalist system.

Social Change as a Process

In academic parlance, the term "change" is considered neutral. It implies that the object to which it is applied becomes different with time. According to this view, social change suggests no law, no theory, no direction, and no continuity. The idea of continuity is introduced when we refer to social change as a process. A process means a continuous change taking place in a definite manner through the operation of forces present from the very beginning within the situation. Examples of processes are communication, socialisation, accommodation, integration, disintegration, competition and conflict.

To study a process we observe a series of transitions between one state of being and another. The quality of the two stages of the process may not be the same. Not the same direction is

conditions for take-off, the take-off, the drive to maturity and the age of high mass consumption); and from tradition to modernity, treat evolution as a unilinear process of change. Even the classical thinkers had the notion of change from tradition to modernity, that is from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity, from status to contract, from community to association, etc.

Ronald Fletcher considers the discipline of sociology evolutionary and developmental in nature. He writes: "Evolution refers essentially to the determinate process of the emergence, continuity, and change of forms in nature and society which involves the accommodation of their own distinctive (and distinctly transmitted) characteristics to the conditions of their environments." A theory of evolution is a theory concerning the causal factors and interconnections involved in this patterning process. It refers to the origin of the distinguishable forms (species) found in the world; their continuity within their own particular ecological settings, and their internal changes, or their proliferation into varieties of new forms within the contexts of new environmental conditions. W.F. Wertheim believes that the emancipation principle is basic to evolution. The struggle of the underprivileged to achieve at least parity with those possessing exclusive skills, and their resulting emancipation from the fetters of domination and ignorance may also produce an advance in general evolution; not only in the sense of levels but also of members.

Revolution

Revolution is an extreme form of change. Since it is not gradual, it is different from evolution. Revolution is also different from such terms as revolt, rebellion, mutiny, uprising, and insurrection. The latter do not have lasting impact upon society. Revolution is different from a revolt or uprising in its magnitude as well as multitude. Revolution is also characterised by irresistibility and irrevocability because a revolution is not simply an episodic disturbance. Wertheim highlights this point as follows: "I

would suggest that the basic criterion is that a revolution always aims at an overthrow of the existing social order and of the prevalent power structure; whereas all other types of disorder, however they may be called, lack this aspiration to fundamental change and simply aim to deal a blow at those in authority, or even to depose or physically eliminate them."

It is difficult to make an accurate estimation of the aspirations of the people and their leaders in a given revolutionary situation. Difficulty also arises in measuring the amount of basic change brought out by revolutionary upheaval. It is also necessary to assess both subjective and objective criteria in a revolution. The subjective ones may be more concerned with the leaders of the revolution, and are hence short-lived. Revolts are more guided by subjective considerations. The objective criteria include the magnitude and multitude of basic change, giving a sense of satisfaction to the leaders and the participants in a revolution. However, a sharp line of demarcation between subjective and objective criteria cannot be drawn as both delineate change of the existing social order.

Revolution refers to the actual tendency towards a fundamental change of the existing social order. The English Civil War checked royal absolutism, and promoted the commercially minded big landlords who destroyed peasant society during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The French Revolution broke the power of the landed elite and provided an alternative way of creating democratic institutions. The American Civil War also broke the power of the landed elite and paved the way for democratic institutions. Thus, revolutions envisage fundamental, enduring changes with the elan of human emancipation.

Revolution and Human Emancipation

Revolution aims at emancipation of man from social, cultural, political and economic bondage. The movements which aim at restoration or reinforcement of the traditional social order can

sections of Indian society. Thus, violence is not an indispensable element of revolution but through non-violent means a fundamental change can be realised only under very specific conditions. Acharya Vinoba Bhave and Jai Prakash Narain followed the Gandhian principle and practice of social change. Bhave carried out the Bhoodan and Gramdan movements, collected land as *dun* and distributed it among the poor. Narain kept himself away from politics, except during the last phase of his life. He did not accept any position of power. He gave the idea of total revolution in the 1970s.

Revolution and Social Change

Revolutions produce fundamental changes in social life. Changes in the political structure are foremost as there is an increased participation of the people in political activities. People have more opportunity to reach positions of status and prestige, which was denied to them in the pre-revolutionary regime. In the economic field too, emancipation of the masses from the old strings is expected as a result of revolutionary change. Agrarian reforms after Independence in India, particularly in the 1950s and early 1960s, have attacked the monolithic control of the landlords over agricultural land. The Green Revolution, in some parts of India, is also due to effective land reforms.

Finally, revolution produces a sense of human dignity, a transformed mentality of the depressed sections of society. We may note such a psychological change in India in the case of peasants, tenants, landless labourers, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and women. They feel more free and emancipated today than in pre-Independence days.

Progress

The idea of social progress is rooted in the tradition of rationalism. The development of science and technology has contributed to the notion of social progress. The idea of progress in fact includes the attributes of rationality, technological advancement, control over forces of

nature and resolution of conflict between social groups. Comte and Spencer equated the notion of evolution with the idea of social progress. Industrial revolution has contributed a lot to social progress.

Progress refers to a desirable change, a realisation of the cherished values. When we speak of progress we imply not merely direction, but direction toward some final goal, some ideal, predetermined destination. If social change occurs in the desired way, it is called progress. Progress is a relativistic notion as it involved comparison of the present with the past state of affairs. However, evaluation of change is made on a certain common scale. Thus, only relative comparisons can give a fair idea of progress. The criteria of evaluation may be economic and technical achievement, cultural attributes, mental growth, etc. The easiest criteria are those of technical advancement. These include, for example, money economy and a communication system. However, there is a close relationship between technological and cultural or social development. The total amount of energy production in a given society cannot be the sole basis of evaluating progress. Such a view assumes that cultural progress is secondary to technological change. Change or progress in one area is, in fact, related to and dependent upon the other area. Change is a complex phenomenon.

The evolutionists, like Lewis Morgan and Herbert Spencer, consider every successive stage of human development progress. Morgan considers the accumulation of inventions in the realm of technology as the determinant of social progress. Spencer stresses the growing complexity of organisations, a more elaborate division of labour and an increase in the size of a society as the main criteria of progress. However, in social terms, progress cannot simply be treated as a phenomenon "from simple to complex". Increasing complexity does not necessarily result in technical progress and higher efficiency. Complexity of caste, joint family and Hinduism have not been conducive to technological progress and social development. On the other hand,

urbanisation and industrialisation have reduced the complexities of caste, family and religion by attacking their rigidities.

Criteria of Progress

A rigid division of labour is not necessarily a sign of progress as it may become a hindrance to progress. It reduces the adaptability to new, different tasks and new technical devices because of narrow and extreme specialisation. In a competitive society, progress can be achieved by increased flexibility. The element of ideology is implicit in the notion of progress. We cannot accept the super-organic nature of culture because it implies that technological advance is secondary to cultural forces. It is also not easy to accept supremacy of technological change because cultural change becomes subservient to it. Industrial progress may be noted in a specific society over a period of time; but there are other accompanying effects of such a progress such as slums, exploitation, dehumanisation, and exploitation of women and children. Industrial unrest has become a serious problem today.

One dimension of progress is that once advantage is achieved, it continues to last. The centres of political power, technological know-how, and cultural excellence become stable. This is a unilinear gradualist view, not supported by available historical evidence. Jan Romein mentions the "skipping" phenomenon in human history as a general trend. There is evidence of shifting centres of human civilisation or political power. We know about the rise and fall of empires, of civilisations, cities and centres of learning. Cyclical change is a widely accepted phenomenon. However, one must also reckon with the fact that a general worldwide trend towards progress has been noticed during the past fifty years and more.

Regression in a country, context or aspect affects its counterparts elsewhere. Thus, Romein puts forward two universally acceptable criteria of progress: (1) technological proficiency; and (2) organisation expediency. Romein adds a third criterion also, that is, evolution is a discon-

tinuous process. Human evolution is, therefore, characterised by the skipping of phases and discontinuity. Romein talks of the "dialectics of progress", that human history progresses in leaps and bounds. A society which has achieved a high degree of perfection in a given direction is not likely to have quick and rapid change again due to complacency and vested interests. Adjustment and stabilisation oppose fundamental change. However, fundamental change would occur where a sense of being underprivileged has become intense and the urge for emancipation has become very strong. In such a situation, resistance to change is weak. Backwardness may act as an advantage in bringing about progress, whereas rapid advance in wages may act as a brake. This is what Romein calls the "dialectics of progress".

Romein's logic does not perhaps apply to the Indian situation. In general, India is considerably behind the countries of Europe, Japan, China and America in the scientific, technological and industrial fields. Within India, backward states, regions and districts have not shown much progress. The better off states and regions have achieved more than the weak ones. The same applies to groups, families and individuals. There is hardly any "skipping" and "discontinuity" as observed by Romein. What we find today are substantial cumulative inequalities, and the concentration of wealth and power in a few hands.

Development

Like the idea of progress, the concept of development refers to a change in the desired direction. The notion of development is a recent phenomenon, whereas the idea of progress dates back to the era of enlightenment and industrial revolution. Development is contextual and relative in nature; progress is considered general and based on rationalistic considerations. Y. Singh refers to development as a strategy of planned social change in a direction which is considered desirable by the members of a society. "The notion of development may, therefore, differ

from society to society based on its socio-cultural background and political and geographical situation". "Development is a composite concept". The development of a society includes progress in various fields, including trade, agriculture, industry, education, health, etc. It also includes the welfare of weaker sections, women and children, sick, unemployed, old people and minorities. Various policies and programmes aim at the development of rural and urban people, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, women, agricultural labourers and industrial workers. Thus, development is a value-loaded concept, specific to the socio-cultural and economic needs of a given society, region and people.

Hobhouse added the element of quantification to change. Four criteria of such a change (development) are increases in scale, efficiency, mutuality and freedom. These criteria are basically applicable to the notion of biological evolution. The criterion of scale is thus basic to development, hence development is unilinear. The criterion of social differentiation has also been attributed to development. Development in this way refers to a fuller growth or evolution of a social phenomenon. Man's control over his environment is one such example of development. Besides these general connotations of the idea of development, there are two specific criteria: (1) evolution of society from the primitive or agricultural stage to industrial society; and (2) economic changes. These aspects imply a growth of knowledge and man's increased control over his environment. In this sense social development is synonymous with social progress.

Myrdal's View of Development

Gunnar Myrdal, in his study *Asian Drama*, observes that the quest for rationality is the basis for development in the economic and social fields. He means by development what he calls the "modernisation ideals". Myrdal writes: "Development means improvement of the host of undesirable conditions in the social system that have perpetuated a state of underdevelopment".

Development can be brought about through planning, which is a rationally coordinated system of policy measures.

India is a social system consisting of a great number of conditions that are causally inter-related, in that a change in one will cause changes in the others. Such an interdependence of different parts of the system and conceiving of the system as a totality based on such relationships are the central points of Myrdal's perspective. The change in one condition bringing about change in other conditions is known as circular causation. Another implication of such an explanation of change is the idea of a vicious circle. Vicious circles are found in the context of poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, bad health, unemployment, etc. For example, if unemployment is not controlled, all other problems would remain. A proper equilibrium is needed to get out of the vicious circles in various social and economic fields.

Myrdal classifies the conditions of development into six broad categories: (1) output and income; (2) conditions of production; (3) levels of living; (4) attitudes toward life and work; (5) institutions; and (6) policies. The first three categories refer to economic factors. Categories four and five represent the non-economic ones. Category six is a mixture of the first three and the latter two. The interdependence of these categories does not imply the precedence of one over the others.

Myrdal is a strong advocate of the institutional approach to social change and development. His emphasis is on the understanding of the people's desire for development or of the articulate ones from amongst them. The desire for development includes changes in institutions, attitudes toward life and work (for example, the theory of karma), levels of living, conditions of production, productivity and income. In a way, all these conditions are social. An upward change in any one of these conditions implies, according to Myrdal, an upward movement of other conditions, and hence of the whole system. However, a change may take place in other conditions indepen-

dently; or it could affect the one which has already affected them. Thus, the independent value of change as well as the ability of change in one condition to effect change in other conditions are basic to the conception of causal interdependence in development.

Development has acquired currency in India as a very significant concept of change in a desired direction. Community Development Programmes were launched in 1952 for achieving allround development of the countryside. The concept of rural development has become popular at the governmental level because of its various schemes, including the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP). We hear a lot about the role of women in development. The development of women, weaker sections, economy, polity and of cultural institutions congenial to national integration, has been receiving priority from the Government of India. There are policies and programmes for the development of industry and agriculture. Besides economic development, new political and social institutions responsive to economic progress have also been promoted. Development is, in fact, a composite phenomenon as it covers all aspects of human life.

Social Movements

Society in India has been highly stratified in terms of caste, class, ethnicity, religion, language, region, etc. Social and economic inequalities are deep-seated. Rigidity of norms in regard to intergroup relations, marriage, religious and ritual observances still exists despite nearly four decades of independence. The history of India is full of accounts of social movements launched against the structural and cultural barriers which prevented people from moving up or in their desired directions. Social movements generally aim at achieving an egalitarian social structure. However, there are also counter-social movements which resist such efforts and do whatever is possible to maintain the status quo.

Social movements have an elaborate ideology which has the aim of remaking socio-economic

and political orders. The programmes of social movements are based on this goal. We may define a social movement as a collective effort to transform some established set of social relations. Movements are never a continuous phenomenon, as they are directed against some very specific unbearable aspects or functioning of society by a significant segment of the population.

At times, social movements may be reformative and at other times, religious or revolutionary in the same society or region. There may be a phase (even a long one) when no significant movements take place in a given society. However, a movement brings into sharp focus some basic issues which need a change, or rechannelling. In fact, a movement requires two things: (1) a minimum degree of organisation; and (2) a commitment to change.

At a point of time social and cultural forces are used by an organisation to achieve some desired goals. These goals may include socio-cultural reforms which, for example, are not permitted by upper castes and dominant socio-economic groups. Movements could be against the exploiters, landlords, industrialists, foreigners and upper castes. They could be launched by the exploited, tenants, industrial workers, natives and Harijans, respectively. In India, movements by women, students, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and the peasantry have acquired a special significance in the post-Independence period as these classes were deprived of certain basic rights in the British period. The Constitution of India and subsequent legislative measures have given them some hopes for their upliftment. Today they have aspirations which urge them to equate themselves with the privileged sections of Indian society.

Y. Singh writes: "Social movement is a process of collective mobilisation of people in a society in an organised manner under an individual or collective leadership in order to realise an ideologically defined social purpose." According to Singh, social movements are characterised by a specific goal which has a collective significance,

ideological interpretation of the collective goal, a rank of committed workers and a strong leadership. Social movements have a life-cycle of their own—origin, maturity and culmination.

Movements also transform themselves by changing from one goal to another. For Example, in the Jharkhand area of Bihar, an organisation named the Unnati Samaj was formed in 1912 to undertake socio-cultural reforms among the tribes of Bihar. In 1938, the Unnati Samaj transformed itself from a socio-cultural to a semi-political organisation, and renamed itself the Adivasi Maha Sabha. The same organisation further transformed itself into a full-fledged political organisation in 1950, and rechristened itself the Jharkhand Party, with the goal of forming a separate state for the adivasis of the Jharkhand region.

Classification of Social Movements

There are innumerable movements, and therefore it is difficult to provide a precise classification of social movements. The most well-known categories of social movements are: (1) reformative; (2) religious; (3) sectarian; (4) sectional; (5) secular; (6) political; and (7) revolutionary. The reformative movements include, for example, the Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj and Prarthana Samaj movements. The religious movements would cover, for example, S.N.D.P. movements in the South and the Akali movement in the Punjab. The sectarian movements include, for example, the Lingayat movement in Karnataka or the Sri Vaishanava movement in the North-east. Sectional movements include the movements organised by students, women, the backward classes, the Dalit, the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and movements launched by the minority groups, lower castes and other specific categories of people.

When the emphasis in a social movement is on the change of socio-economic and political conditions of the entire society or a part of it, it can be called a secular movement. Secular social movements would involve the participation of sev-

classes and categories of people. Political or ideological movements are generally launched by specific political groups and parties. However, struggles for freedom against colonialism and foreign rule have involved all the major political groups and parties, as such situations demand cooperation from all of them. All of them had the common goal of independence.

Considerations in the Study of Social Movements

How does one study social movements? T.K. Oommen suggests that "an adequate framework for the study of social movements should take into account the historicity, the elements of present social structure and the future vision of the society in which they originate and operate". Thus, a social movement involves the past, the present and the envisioned future. Oommen and P.N. Mukherji both observe that a study of social movements implies a study of social structure; as movements originate from the contradictions, which in turn emanate from social structure, and social movements tend to bring about change in the social structure.

Thus, social movements are not accidental or superficially manipulated devices of social change. Political parties and groups are generally involved in organising a movement, mobilising people and articulating the goals of a given social movement. Movements, by definition, are forces against the status quo. Oommen states that all social movements centre around three factors: (1) locality, (2) issues and (3) social categories. Place, problems and the people who suffer from the problems are taken into account while making a mention of these factors.

We have recently witnessed state-formation and autonomy movements launched by regional parties and organisations. A study of these movements in relation to the culture, language, religion, ethnic composition, economic development and aspirations of the people in the various regions and states could reveal the nature of the congruity or lack of congruity between the regional goals and

Evolutionary Approaches

These approaches analyse the stages through which the institutions like caste, family, marriage and kinship and village community have passed in India. British ethnographers in particular emphasised the study of caste in terms of its racial composition and origin with a speculative perspective. Caste was also compared with analogous institutions elsewhere in terms of racial, occupational ethnic and other socio-cultural criteria. The origin of caste was substantiated by the details found in myths, epics, history and oral traditions. Sir Henry Maine's study of the Indian village community and Baden-Fowell's study of land tenure systems were also influenced by the evolutionary-comparative perspective. The Indian village was compared with its Western counterpart to ascertain its growth. For example, the evolutionary view is explicit when it is stated that communal ownership was transformed into joint-sharing and single landlord ownership.

M.N. Srinivas explains the processes of social change in India through the concepts of Sanskritisation and Westernisation. Srinivas defines sanskritisation "as the process by which a 'low' caste or tribe or other group takes over the customs, rituals, beliefs, ideology and style of life of a high and, in particular, a 'twice-born' (dwija) caste". Thus, the lower caste people imitate the life-ways of the upper castes with a view to improve their status within the framework of caste. Y. Singh, while commenting on the concept of sanskritisation, states that it has two connotations: (1) historical and (2) contextual. In the historical context, sanskritisation has been a process of social mobility throughout the history of Indian society. In the contextual context, Sanskritisation is a process of change in a relative sense. The magnitude of the process varies from region to region or even from village to village, depending upon the factors internal to the context and also upon the factors external to it.

The processes of "de-Sanskritisation" and "tribalisation" due to local factors have been noted in some parts. Certainly, the process of Sanskritisation is to some extent the result of the socio-economic and political deprivations of some sections of Indian society. It also points to

the privileged position of those caste groups which become referents for sanskritisation. One can say that sanskritisation amounts to be an attack on the "dominant castes". Srinivas defines "dominant castes" in terms of economic, ritual and social status of the people at village level. The numerical strength of a caste group and its political power may, at times, add to caste dominance. Some caste groups are also dominant at sub-regional and regional levels. However, the dominant castes have changed their strategies of perpetuating their dominance in the local context. Today, the dominant castes have been adopting those ways and means which are beyond an easy access of the lower caste groups.

The concept of sanskritisation suffers from several limitations. It explains only socio-cultural mobility and that too in a very limited way. The lower caste people are generally able to adopt the cultural practices of the upper castes, and these practices no longer remain a source of strength and status for the upper castes. Srinivas initially thought of this process in terms of "Brahmanisation", but later on it was brought out in several studies that the lower castes imitated the life-ways of several groups who were not necessarily Brahmins. In fact, Sanskritisation depends upon resource availability, mobilisation and accessibility at the level of the lower castes. The sanskritising castes may even face a threat or challenge from the dominant castes. Sanskritisation has also been found in economic and political arenas. The fact is that even cultural mobility of a lower caste becomes a source of power for it. Y. Singh also hints that sanskritisation may result in strains on the social system. Srinivas thinks of "positional changes" as a result of the process of sanskritisation. Positional changes are within the caste system and not of the system. Caste does not change; changes take place within the caste. Horizontal changes are, in fact, positional changes. Slight improvements, by using channels of social mobility, have occurred quite often in the post-Independence period.

Westernisation refers to changes brought about as a consequence of the contact with western culture, particularly with the British. According to Srinivas, various caste groups, particularly the upper castes, adopted the cultural style of the British. Besides cultural imitation, a lot has been absorbed from the fields of western science, technology, education, ideology and values. The values of humanitarianism and rationalism are basic to the concept of westernisation. Srinivas does not find these two values in the concept of "modernisation"; hence his preference for the concept of westernisation. However, the point that the 150 years of British rule in India have inculcated the values of humanitarianism and rationalism is not substantiated by the history of this period. In fact, the British did everything to perpetuate their rule in India including giving communal awards, communal electorates, ruining India's economy, and putting one caste or group against other through its policy of divide and rule.

Srinivas refers to three levels of westernisation:

(1) primary; (2) secondary; and (3) tertiary. The primary level refers to those people who came directly into contact with the British; the secondary level includes those who were directly benefitted by those who were at the primary level; and at the tertiary level are the people who were remotely benefitted by the process of westernisation.

Westernisation created new status cleavages and distinctions and did not do away with the existing ones. Both sanskritisation and westernisation are processes of cultural change. Srinivas analyses them as if these two could encompass the totality of social change. Basic structural changes in the fields of agriculture, industry, polity, and the changing relations between the rich and the poor, the landlord and the tenant, the dominant and the weak have remained outside the purview of Srinivas's culturological perspective.

and Great and Multiple Traditions

Robert Redfield considers the "social organisation of tradition" the basis of analysis of social and cultural changes. The civilisation of India is primary or indigenous in nature. It has not been much affected by heterogenetic factors of social change. The primary civilisation of India is divided into: (1) the little traditions; and (2) the great tradition. The little tradition refers to the folk or unlettered peasants; and the great tradition includes the elite or the reflective few. There is constant interaction between the little and the great traditions. Logically, there is a constant flow of ideas and transaction of social relations between the folk and the elite.

The unity of India's primary civilisation is maintained by the interaction between these two traditions through the processes of universalisation and parochialisation; as suggested by McKim Marriott. "Universalisation refers to the spread of the elements of the little tradition which may also become a part of the sanskritic or great tradition. Parochialisation refers to the filtering down of the elements of the great tradition to the unlettered folk". These processes of spread—upward and downward—explain the nature of interaction between the little and the great traditions.

This approach is also narrow in scope as it only takes into account cultural phenomena and their cognitive dimension. It is an effort to understand structure through culture. The little traditions are equated with the folk (the little people); and the great tradition is of the elite, the literate (the sanskritic people). Such an implication is quite dangerous as it means dehumanisation of the unlettered folk and glorification of those who have access to the sanskritic traditions and literature. Besides this dangerous implication, a dichotomy at the cultural level does not automatically correspond to a dichotomy between the people at socio-structural level. The nature of interaction between the privileged and the suppressed is not as simple as the one we notice between the great and the little traditions.

S.C. Dube is of the view that a dichotomy of the traditions is not adequate to explain the complex nature of India's structure of tradition. He refers to a hierarchy of traditions. Dube is also critical of the concepts of sanskritisation and dominant caste. In fact, corporate mobility envisaged by the concept of sanskritisation seems to be unrealistic to Dube. While criticising the dichotomy of traditions, he mentions a six-point classification of traditions in India. These are: (1) the classical tradition; (2) the emergent national tradition; (3) the regional tradition; (4) the local tradition; (5) the western tradition; and (6) the local sub-cultural traditions of social groups. Y. Singh observes that this classification is also ad hoc, like the ad hoc basis of the concept of sanskritisation. It is heuristic. Dube also emphasises on culture rather than structure.

Structural Approaches

Structural analysis identifies independent causal variables to understand social change. The units of study are not ideas, norms and values, but are roles and statuses, and hence groups and categories of people. The hierarchy of groups, asymmetry of social relations, uneven distribution of societal goods, etc., compel the formulation of new rules and regulations, emergence of new structures and transformation of the existing ones. Structural analysis of social change takes these into consideration as focal points of study. Before Independence, the princes, jagirdars and zamindars controlled land and other resources. With the abolition of these systems of governance and land tenure, some structural changes have occurred. The traditional asymmetry has almost been mitigated. The tenants own land, and the landlords are seen toiling with their ex-tenants. Structural changes are also due to the Green Revolution, means of transport, adult franchise, development programmes and decentralisation of power at the local level.

Structural differentiation and social mobility have been observed in the context of family, caste, power structure, landownership, etc. Norms, obligations, roles, functions and statuses have changed considerably in these structural

units. Corporate mobility has become negligible. Families and individuals, independent of their caste affinity, have moved up in economic and political fields. They have become units of dominance and power. Factionalism within caste or village has become a well-established fact. Occupational mobility and migration have become pronounced. Education has also contributed to some of these developments. Family is today functionally joint to a large extent, but structurally nuclear. Caste is becoming increasingly an interest group of the articulate few from among the members of a caste. In the countryside, the intermediate peasant castes have gained strength economically and politically. They are occupying positions of power and influence in panchayats and legislatures. Conflict between the upper castes and the intermediate castes (backward castes) has suddenly increased after Independence, particularly in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka. Conflict between the dominant peasant castes and Harijans has also increased in several states due to structural changes in their positions.

Dialectical-Historical Approach

Karl Marx is the main architect of the dialectical-historical approach. The four phases of social change in Marx's scheme are: the Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal and the modern bourgeoisie modes of production. Marx initially thought of India as a static, historical and primeval social formation. However, it was wrong to think of India as fixed and stationary. Marx revised his view later on. According to Y. Singh, he mentioned five stages in social differentiation: (1) the tribal community with undivided land and agriculture in common; (2) disintegration of the tribal community and its transformation into family communities with loosening of common property; (3) and shares being fixed by inheritance trends or the degree of kinship, thus creating inequality (tribal wars further increased this inequality); (4) transformation of inequality based on kinship into inequality based on possession, as expressed by actual cultivation; and

(5) a system of periodic distribution of communal land.

Studies of social change in India with the Marxist perspective have analysed caste and politics, modes of production, class relations and distribution of accessibility to resources and opportunities. D.P. Mukerji applied the Marxist approach with certain modifications, to the study of social change. In analysing the emergence of the new class structure he found the role of the Indian tradition immensely useful. The Indian tradition is both a resilient and an adaptive cultural force. Tradition is a conserving force; it brings about adjustment after tension and conflict.

A.R. Desai, while analysing the social background of nationalism in India, finds the Marxist approach quite appropriate and fruitful. Class-based inequalities and contradictions, according to Desai, determine the nature of social change and development. The emergence of nationalism in India is a product of the material conditions created by British colonialism. Ramkrishna Mukherjee has also applied the Marxist approach in his study *The Rise and Fall of the East India Company*.

The essence of the Marxist and neo-Marxist views on social change is the evolutionary nature of change with class and class-contradictions as focal points of observation in terms of domination and subjugation, rich and poor, powerful and weak people, groups, societies and nations. The capitalistic world has produced social relations in this form.

Louis Dumont, while advocating the cognitive-historical approach, emphasises on change in terms of adaptive or transformative processes in the traditional ideo-structure. Cultural or ideational change is a pre-condition to bring about change in social structure. Another approach to social change has been suggested by Gunnar Myrdal. Myrdal's institutional approach highlights the role of non-economic factors as obstacles in economic development. The attitudes towards life, work and institutions must be changed to ensure economic develop-

ment in the desired direction.

Studies of social change today need to make a sharp turn towards the study of some very basic aspects of society, namely, the nature of resources, distributive processes, creation of new infrastructures and institutional mechanisms, educational system, polity, state, land relations, mechanisms of exploitation, wages, levels of living, etc., with a comparative focus in terms of time, people and context. It is necessary to know at what levels social change and mobility are taking place. Bourgeoisification and proletarianisation as processes of structural change, downward and upward mobility, migration and education need to be studied on a priority basis. These aspects are more important than a study of pollution-purity, commensality and connubiality and other normative aspects.

Y. Singh has attempted an integrated approach to analyse social change in India. His emphasis is on the sources of changes, cultural structure (little tradition and great tradition) and social structure (micro-structure and macro-structure). In terms of heterogenetic changes at the level of cultural structure, Islamisation and primary westernisation (little tradition) and secondary Islamic impact and secondary westernisation or modernisation (great tradition) are observed. At the level of social structure, role-differentiation, new legitimations at the micro-level, and political innovations, new structures of elite, bureaucracy, industry, etc. at the macro-level are noticed.

These changes are caused by factors external to the Indian social system. In terms of orthogenetic changes at the level of cultural structure, sanskritisation or traditionalisation (little tradi-

tion) and cultural renaissance (great tradition) take place. At the level of social structure, pattern, recurrence, compulsive migration or population shift at the micro-level, and elite circulation, succession of kings, rise and fall of cities and trade centres at the macro-level are observed. Singh explains causation of social change within and without the social system or the tradition. His integrated view strives at a balance between the sources of changes, cultural and social structures and within them between micro and macro levels of actual social change.

Conclusion

Conformity and change are universal phenomena. Change *in* the system and change *of* the system are also universally observed; but change of the system is a rare phenomenon. Change in the system is continuous and existent in almost all societies at all times. Change is a broad concept. It includes both progression and regression. Evolution, revolution, development, progress and social movements all can be called concepts of social change. A study of social change takes into consideration causes and consequences, their nature and differential impact on various sections of society.

We have discussed various approaches to understand structural and cultural change. Our analysis shows that cultural change has been over-emphasised, and several areas in which structural change has occurred have been left out. A study of continuity of traditional forms of social inequality, emergence of new inequalities, and the interaction between the two could explain the nature of resources and their distributive mechanisms in Indian society.

EXERCISES

1. Define social change. Distinguish it from the concept of social process.
2. Discuss the concept of evolution. Differentiate between unilinear and multilinear evolution.
3. Name some prominent advocates of the evolutionary approach in social sciences.
4. Attempt a definition of revolution. Give concrete examples of revolution and counter-revolution from the contemporary world.
5. Was the Gandhian movement revolutionary?
6. In what way are evolution and revolution both processes of man's emancipation from bondage and exploitation?
7. Write a note on the notion of "progress". Is it a value-loaded concept?
8. What are Jan Romein's criteria of progress? Explain his concepts of "skipping" and "dialectics of progress"
9. "Development is a composite concept." Discuss.
10. Bring out the relationship between social structure and development.
11. What is Gunnar Myrdal's perspective of development?
12. What are the main attributes of a social movement? How is a social movement different from social change?
13. Give a suitable classification of social movements. Draw illustrations from the recent movements launched in India.
14. Write an essay on the major approaches to the study of social change in India.
15. Explain the following:
 - i. Sanskritisation
 - ii. Westernisation
 - iii. Dominant Caste
 - iv. Modernisation
 - v. Little and Great traditions
 - vi. Universalisation and parochialisation
16. Write notes on the contributions of the following to the study of social change:
 - 1) M.N. Srinivas
 - 2) S.C. Dube
 - 3) Y. Singh
 - 4) A.R. Desai

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Chapter XVI

Factors of Social Change

Introduction

Social change is initiated in the structure and culture of society through internal and external sources. The structure of society refers to infrastructural facilities, their distribution among people and also people's access to them. The culture of society consists of traditions, religion and norms of living and behaving with each other. Since the structure and culture of society have not remained static, social change becomes an inevitable process.

It has been stated in the earlier chapter that the direction of social change can be upward or downward, linear, multilinear or cyclical. Social change can occur in the form of progression or regression. Thus, social change refers to alteration in the structure and culture of a given society. Generally, it is value-neutral, but sometimes social change takes place in the form of ideological expressions of a conservative or radical nature. Change is also cumulative, particularly in the field of science and technology. Besides being cumulative and evolutionary, change is also cyclical and curve-like.

Since tradition and modernity coexist, continuity and change are empirical facts of social life. Tradition and continuity coexist because all societies need a certain amount of stability and social checks. Modernity and change are required to attain new levels of knowledge and technical know-how to meet changing demands and challenges. It is these conditions which call for social change. Social tensions and conflicts are also sources of social change. Social conflicts

are caused by differential values of the old and the young, the educated and the illiterate, the townsmen and the rural folk.

Factors of Social Change

There is no single cause of social conflict and change. The following factors have, however, been mentioned: (1) Demographic; (2) Technological; (3) Economic; (4) Cultural; (5) Legal and administrative; and (6) Political.

Gunnar Myrdal observes that in Europe the changes have taken the form of a "demographic transition" from high to low rates of both births and deaths, without a very wide gap developing between the two. In the case of Japan, due to late start of change, a gap developed between the two. In south Asia, the trend has been toward a gradually widening gap culminating in a "demographic explosion". In India, economic development has not kept pace with the population explosion. Improvement in per capita income and standards of living in India will be possible only with a check on the fast growing population. India is not in a position to invest in improvements because of the high cost of feeding its people. Productivity suffers because of the frightening rate of population growth.

Over-population results in the problems of unemployment and under-employment, poverty, housing shortage, illiteracy, poor health and crowding of towns and cities as there is an increase in migration from rural to urban areas. Malthusian theory does not apply to the Indian situation because the death rate has come down considerably due to improvement in health con-

ditions. However, there has been much less change in the birth rate.

Technological Factors

Technology has brought about significant changes in Indian society and elsewhere. The Industrial Revolution was a product of new advances in science and technology. Thorstein Veblen worked out his theory of leisure and the leisure-class on the basis of new strides in scientific fields. The class which extracts the maximum surplus due to advancement in the technological field spends conspicuously on consumption items with a view to achieve social recognition. W.F. Ogburn has propounded the theory of "cultural lag" to explain the lack of correspondence between technological advancement and social change. Technology changes faster than culture; hence the latter lags behind. However, one view is that such a hiatus does not exist in India. Culture changes faster in India than technology, because the latter is not easily available.

Industrialisation and the Green Revolution are two major processes of change in the fields of industry and agriculture. Along with these changes we notice changes in transportation and communication. Electrification and irrigation have changed the village scene to a large extent. New classes of people and social relations have emerged in the countryside. New industrial townships have brought about a new pattern of class relations. Towns like Jamshedpur, Bhilai, Rourkela and Bokaro are examples of the process of industrialisation in post-Independence India.

India's industrial development has been slow, particularly in the pre-Independence period. The British imposed heavy taxes on Indian goods. The British ruined India's traditional trades and crafts through its commercial policy. "Restrictions were imposed upon Indians exporting to the West, while favours were granted to British exporters, who flooded the Indian markets." Even today, only a little more than two per cent of the total workforce is engaged in industry. A

little more than six per cent of the national income comes from the industrial sector. Despite this gloomy picture, India does not lack in industrial resources. A very substantial percentage of the urban population is employed in industry. Iron ore deposits, deposits of limonite, manganese, chromium, gold, gypsum, mica, bauxite, ilmenite and non-ferrous metals are available in substantial quantities. There is encouraging potential for hydroelectric power, engineering, chemical and steel industries.

The industrial development of India began with the introduction of railways in the middle of the nineteenth century. The main railway centres became the hubs of industrial development due to the facility of transportation. After 1860, British industrial supremacy was challenged by technology from Germany, America and Japan; and this challenge also encouraged the industrial development of India. "Using cheap labour, they managed to defeat foreign competition while bringing in high profits." The British also began to invest by founding some new industries in India. Charles Bettelheim observes that "throughout the nineteenth century a mercantile, moneylending bourgeoisie was taking shape in Indian society, its roots already formed in numerous existing trade centres of varying prosperity."

It is evident that Indian commercial and moneylending capital was partially transformed into industrial capital largely due to change in the British policy. Industrialisation has taken new strides in the twentieth century. New industries have come up in place of the traditional ones. Industrial output has increased and the industrial labour force has increased manifold. The Indian industrial proletariat is employed mainly in big industrial enterprises. However, big industries are concentrated in a few towns located in some states only.

The edifice of modernity has been constructed in India on social, ecological and regional disparities right from the beginning of the British Raj. It was a hierarchical society, and continues to be so in many ways with some transformations in

legal, administrative, social and economic fields. Noticeable changes in agriculture took place earlier due to road, railway and canal construction. Today, besides these factors, the Green Revolution which includes the use of chemical fertilisers, high-yielding seeds, new techniques of irrigating fields, and the use of tractors and other mechanical devices has brought about significant changes in India's rural economy.

The British appointed a zamindar with the specific right to get commission on the land revenue he collected for the British. The zamindar not only collected land revenue, but he also collected charges, fees and a variety of taxes from the people in his *mahal* (area of jurisdiction). A new form of local power structure emerged with these zamindars at the top. Below the zamindars were the *raiyyats* (proprietary cultivators) who were given the right to cultivate land as permanent tenants, and had direct access to the British revenue officials. Share-croppers, tenants-at-will, agricultural labourers and kamins (servants) were other categories of people who belonged to various caste groups.

Priests and moneylenders were other influential classes, besides the zamindars. Different caste and occupational groups were dependent upon each other through the *jajmani* system (an arrangement of fulfilling duties and obligations assigned to each caste group). Changes have taken place in India's social, economic and political structure due to legal and administrative reforms, education, industrialisation, the Green Revolution and scientific and technological advancements. Family, caste, village and city have been greatly affected by these changes.

Economic Factors

Karl Marx is the chief architect of the economic theory of social change. The mode of production determines social, cultural, religious and political aspects of social life. Marx speaks of change in terms of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, as stages of social formation corresponding with feudalism, capitalism and socialism. Capitalism has emerged because of the contradictions emanat-

ing from feudalism. Socialism would emerge from capitalism as a result of class-struggle. There are two classes in the capitalistic system: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The latter are wage-earners and the former are extractors of surplus. Capitalism would come under severe strain when wage-earners challenge its continuity. A revolutionary change alone is a solution to the ills of capitalism.

Intellectuals, leaders and academics have been influenced by the essence of Marxism. The quintessence of the Marxist approach is that material conditions are basic to Indian society, and change in these conditions would automatically bring about corresponding change in other spheres of life. There are two implications of this view: (1) industry and agriculture are inter-related; and (2) agricultural production in India is capitalistic in its form as well as content. In view of these assumptions, what one needs is a scrutiny as to whether there has been structural change in terms of shifting of economic power from one group or class to another; and whether technological devices have further consolidated the traditional inequalities (based on caste status and landownership) or reduced them considerably.

There are instances of structural change particularly during the early years of our independence. In several parts of India, the jagirdars and zamindars lost their landholdings as a result of the abolition of these systems of land tenure. The tenants of these landlords were benefitted by these reforms, as proprietary rights were granted to them to own the landholdings earlier owned by their masters. These changes refer to obverse structural processes of change. In the case of landlords it can be called proletarianisation, and in the context of tenants it can be referred as bourgeoisification. F.G. Bailey has noted a similar process of change in Orissa. With the abolition of landlordism, the toddy-tappers, who used to supply liquor to their landlords, began selling all their produce in the open market. In a short spell of time, the economic condition improved in

Q. Khan

India

Cultural Factors

The cultural structure of India includes Sanskrit and local traditions. Tradition has been taken as a focal point of study by several scholars including Talcott Parsons, Milton Singer and W. D. D. Sharma. The main argument is that a change in ideas, norms, values, rituals and religious observances is a pre-condition to bring about basic changes in economic and political relations. John Veith finds the pre-eminence of caste-militarism in certain elements promotes economic development. On the contrary, Hinduism, because of its emphasis on asceticism, discourages capitalistic economic development. However, recent studies of caste and family have shown that there is nothing negative and retrograde in the Hindu ethic to retard or obstruct economic development.

Milton Singer in his study of entrepreneurs of Madras, shows that caste and joint family have positively contributed to business and entrepreneurship. He finds G. V. Srinivas's idea of "obstacles" created by institutional factors in the modernization of India immaterial due to the resilience of caste, family and Hindu religion. Caste has made inroads into secular fields like politics, elections and government jobs. Members of a family help each other in economic and other pursuits. This has helped them manage their economic and business enterprises better.

W. D. D. Sharma has emphasised the significance of cultural and caste mobility as sources of social change in India. A caste group can elevate its position by emulating the ideas and practices of a superior caste group and some of its members in the process of change, the assimilating castes also discard those traditional callings and practices which have kept them in lower positions for centuries. Education, secular jobs and migration to towns have also helped the lower caste groups in status-elevation.

Such efforts may wither and progress from the dominant castes, as they were taken as a threat to their traditional hegemony. Conflicts between

The state, as a welfare agency, has played a significant role in India's economic development. The abolition of traditional systems of land tenure, such as zamindari and jagadari, a ceiling on landholdings, promotion of credit co-operatives schemes and other programmes of economic upliftment are positive indications of the state's policies and programmes. The effects of these policies and programmes and of the Green Revolution have been seen in the form of a new level of social transformation.

A new form of universality has emerged in place of the old one. Caste has changed to adjust itself to the demands of the new situations. Family cannot remain structurally joint, since its members often do not live in the same place; but it has acquired a "functional jointness" by helping its members while they remain at different and distant places. The constraints today are such that members of a family cannot generally find jobs at the same place. Thus, change in India is more in the form of transformation rather than replacement. It is more accretive than cumulative.

the upper and lower castes have occurred whenever the lower castes defied their traditional obligations towards the upper caste jajmans and landlords. Besides resistance to these efforts of the lower castes, the upper castes have found alternative bases of social status; through westernisation of their life styles, higher education, lucrative jobs, migration to cities, entrenchment into politics, etc. The net result is the continuity of social and economic hiatus between various caste and class groups. Cultural mobility, however, has latent potentiality for social change besides for creating a psychological awakening among the depressed sections of Indian society.

Legal Factors

The law has played an immense role in bringing about social change in Indian society. Indian society is complex and heterogeneous and law can ensure homogeneity and assimilation of divergent sections. Law can bring about radical changes particularly favouring the lower sections. It can be an instrument of change in political and economic institutions and also in mitigating social evils and reforming the educational system. Knowledge of the law can make a man rational and human by exposing the irrationality of dogma and superstition. Law can attack the age-old dysfunctional institutions. It can bring about rural social transformation, discipline and scientific and rational attitudes.

However, law alone cannot do much without corresponding changes in the structure of society and moral fibre of the people. Public opinion is a stronger means of change. Values cannot be changed by law alone. Law remains an ineffective means of change and control if it affects the poor only and leaves the rich out of its orbit.

Y. Singh refers to three functions of law: (1) as an indicator of change; (2) as an initiator of change; and (3) as an integrator of change. Law performs an integrative or assimilative function. In India, the legal system is a historical product. It has colonial and feudal roots. Law was elite-sponsored and served the elite strata and the urban middle classes.

The Constitution of India is the monumental base of the modern legal system in India. It incorporates the norms of equality, social justice, freedom and secularism. The Constitution also recognizes cultural pluralism, caste-based inequalities and economic and social backwardness of some sections. However, the Constitution is full of contradictions, as it guarantees certain fundamental rights, but does not include the right to work. What is necessary for the poorer sections of society has not been included in the fundamental rights of the people.

Generally speaking, certain lacunae have been found in legislations. In fact, the legal system depends for its legitimation upon the political system. Legislations were formulated for bringing about land reforms in the 1950s, but they were implemented half-heartedly in most of the states of India. Caste and untouchability are illegal, but are, in practice, found without much change. There is a provision for seeking divorce, but very few women come forward to seek divorce against their cruel husbands. A stringent anti-dowry act exists, but dowry continues to grow in its ugliest form without any check.

A number of laws related to egalitarian measures have remained ineffective because of inbuilt flaws and the indifference of the law-implementers. Despite these limitations, law remains an integrative and corrective measure in Indian Society. Efforts are being made to check the problems of black money, tax evasion and corruption by having stringent laws.

Political Factors

The right to vote in elections, from village panchayat to parliament, has created a great deal of social and political awakening since Independence. A large section of Indian society, both men and women, have participated in general elections and elections for village panchayats and municipal bodies. As a result of these elections one finds administrative and political linkages between the village, block, district, state and centre. These linkages are also found in regard to political parties and their leadership. Political

parties have not only been working for winning elections, but they have also taken up issues of national interest and ideological nature.

Sometimes one feels that everything is patterned on party lines in towns and villages. Castes, communities, specific issues and problems are looked at from the point of view of a given political party. Factions and cleavages are found on party lines. Ideological divides are also found within political parties, and these are aligned with social divisions in terms of castes and sub-castes and classes and religious or ethnic groupings.

Politicisation of castes and other social entities has led to social mobilisation in elections. The numerically preponderant caste groups have been able to acquire positions of power by uniting at the time of elections. The principal peasant castes in various states have been very effective in elections despite their social and educational backwardness in comparison to the upper castes. At times the traditionally entrenched castes have been at the receiving end in the game of politics and power.

The Indian voter has reacted very strongly on crucial issues in general elections. The elections of 1967, 1971, 1977, 1980 and 1984 are noteworthy in this context. In the 1967 elections, the Congress party lost in more than half the states. In the 1971 elections, which were held after the formation of Bangladesh, the Congress came to power with an overwhelming majority. The Congress lost badly in the 1977 elections, which were held after lifting the national emergency which was imposed in June 1975. Since the Janata Party failed to deliver the goods as expected after the 1977 elections, the Congress came out as the victorious party in the 1980 elections. The elections of 1984 were held after the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The electorate disapproved strongly such a crime and sent the Congress party to power, breaking all earlier records of victory. This brief survey speaks of the prudence of the Indian electorate and the success of democracy in India.

Analysis

Sources of change are both internal and external. Change takes place at the micro as well as macro levels. The internal factors are legislation, reform movements, education and contradictions within the existing systems; the external factors include cultural contact, attack by foreign powers, transfer of scientific and technological devices from other countries, international trade and commerce, etc. Macro changes would include legislation, innovation, etc., whereas new roles, migration etc. are contextual or micro changes. Change in one sphere affects other spheres of social life. Therefore, it is necessary to take an integrated view which can account for various sources as well as factors of social change.

To discern social change we have to look at village life, caste, family, city life and socio-cultural norms and values. The *jajmani* system is no more a system of functional interdependence between different caste groups.

Elections have created a lot of politicisation and factionalism among the villagers. Village life has changed a great deal due to the impact of the wider economy and polity. Caste is not today simply confined to norms of commensal relations or rules of marriage and patterns of interaction based on the notions of pollution and purity; it has become an interest group in elections, and an instrument of social and cultural mobility.

To a large extent family in India is not structurally joint, but it continues to be functionally joint. Industrialisation, urbanisation and modern education have strengthened functional jointness because people have more resources and find it easy to help each other on important social occasions and in crisis situations. All the members of a family cannot live together as they do not work at the same place, hence family ceases to be structurally joint.

Urban population has increased by six per cent from 1951 to 1981. Cities and towns have become centres of higher education and learning, attracting more young people from villages, initially for education and subsequently for seeking white-collar jobs.

Other factors causing the exodus from villages are poverty, unemployment and lack of proper health care. Since towns and cities have monopolised economic resources and medical facilities, there is overburdening of cities due to migration from villages. The numbers of the middle classes, particularly the salaried groups, have shown a phenomenal rise in the post-Independence period.

Traditional values and norms have certainly been loosening their hold due to these changes. Notions of pollution-purity and untouchability today do not pervade equally into all aspects of our social life. These norms are observed in a very lukewarm way on some occasions. However, rules regarding marriage, particularly hypergamy, caste endogamy and clan exogamy are observed to a large extent.

Thus, social change in India is really a very complex phenomenon as it has varied forms and manifestations. Scarlett Epstein's comparative study of two villages in Karnataka reports that economic development does not necessarily result in social change, and social change may not necessarily lead to economic development. The irrigated village had more economic development and less social change. The unirrigated village had more of social change and less of economic development. The former did not witness much migration, education, politicisation and diversification, whereas the latter had

a lot of diversification, differentiation, migration education and politicisation, as the people had to move out of the village to seek employment elsewhere. The irrigated village provided economic security to the people, hence not much social change occurred. However, this does not imply that economic development and social change are independent of each other. This example simply explains the complexity of social change in India.

Conclusion

Social change in India can be explained in terms of coexistence of tradition and modernity and continuity and change. Factors of social change are demographic, technological, economic, cultural, legal and political. The problem of overpopulation has hindered economic development. Industrialisation has suffered from lack of proper direction because of the harm done to industrial growth by the British rule. Cultural changes are faster than economic changes. The two have been at times independent of each other. The role of the law and judiciary in a developing country like India has been immense in providing protection to the weaker sections of society and in delegitimising the traditionally privileged groups who enjoyed economic and political power. The traditionally underprivileged people have elevated their status and position since Independence.

EXERCISES

1. Bring out the relationship between over-population and underdevelopment.
2. Explain the main reasons for India's slow pace of industrialisation.
3. Discuss the relationship between economic development and social change. Substantiate your answer by drawing facts from some empirical studies.
4. Tradition and modernity co-exist in India. Explain.
5. Analyse the role of tradition in social change.
6. Law is an agent of social change. Explain this statement with suitable examples.
7. Write notes on the following:
 - i. Politicisation
 - ii. External and internal factors of social change
 - iii. The state and social change.

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Chapter XVII

National Integration

Introduction .

National integration is dependent upon structural, cultural and ideological congruity and harmony among different sections of a given society. These congruous values and norms are stated in the *Constitution of India* through proclamations about democracy, secularism and socialism. Structural equality demands equal opportunity for all sections of society and more so for the depressed ones. Absence of discrimination based on ascriptive criteria such as caste, parentage and heritage and normative considerations like pollution-purity are the cultural prerequisites of national integration. Ideological differences are natural in Indian society because of its structural and cultural complexities, but a certain level of consensus about "national goals" is basic for keeping people together as a nation.

There are some very positive aspects of national integration. Besides fostering a sense of emotional oneness, national integration provides strength to the people to fight against evil forces. Socio-cultural and economic disparities and inequalities tend to reduce in a situation of national unity and solidarity. Fissiparous and divisive forces become inactive when national unity is intense and comprehensive. National integration is a positive notion, and therefore, can accelerate the pace of development and social change. In this chapter we will discuss the concept of national integration, communalism, nationalism, regionalism, political consolidation and minorities in relation to national integration. An analysis of the "official view" of national

integration and the hurdles in its realisation shows that the "identity crisis" is the main obstacle in national integration. Structural inequalities tend to create an identity crisis among minorities. Besides cultural and ideological integration, structural integration is needed equally or even more.

Definition of National Integration

India is characterised by a plurality of people divided in terms of religion, region, language, caste and class. It has a hierarchical social order comprising of groups and individuals with unequal status. Consequent upon the multiplicity of status groups with differential access to resources and opportunities for employment and education, we find a multitude of problems. The *Constitution of India* makes a reference to the "integrity" of the Nation. But the question is: can national integration be fostered without removing or minimising socio-cultural and economic inequalities? We know that no perfect social order can be achieved; as no absolutely homogeneous people can be found in reality. However, despite differences among people, a certain level of unity, harmony and cohesion among different sections of society can be achieved by ensuring certain minimum institutional mechanisms and infrastructural facilities for the less advantaged and the weaker sections. But this does not mean that the only cause of national disintegration is economic inequality and disparity. The problem of national integration is also found among those groups who

have less economic disparities.

Thus, national integration is a composite concept. It has several dimensions, namely, social, cultural, economic, political and religious. It also depends upon the contextual position of a particular group in the national and regional or local settings. The problem of the integration of Muslims is different from other minorities in India, because they are the largest minority group. Pakistan was formed partly because of the "communal award" granted by the British. The Muslims are generally poor and "backward" compared to the Hindus.

What is national integration? Is it desirable to have national integration by advocating "common values" which do not bring about egalitarian relations? Integration can be maintained by keeping society static. Thus, lack of change or conflict can also be viewed as a state of integration. However, stagnation, immobility or a lack of change and conflict are not indicative of integration. They are, on the other hand, symptomatic of disintegration. Development, change and mobility go along with integration. What is achieved by having integration is more important than keeping society regimented or stable.

One view is that integration should be considered a positive concept with a scheme of socio-economic change. The state should be an agency for carrying out such a programme to harmonise relations between different antagonistic or hostile groups. Obviously, the advocates of this view feel that national integration cannot be achieved simply by spreading the ideology of religious coexistence and harmony. However, it is also a fact that when people belonging to various religions live in the same society, they are bound to have some problems, even if they have economic parity to a large extent. In a tribal society, where economic inequalities are not very pronounced, religion and magical practices work as the unifying forces. Religion plays an integrative role, but it has to be seen in terms of the overall situation of a nation-state.

Communalism, Nationalism and National Integration

Apparently communalism and national integration do not coexist. The policy of communal award, which we discussed earlier in Chapter four, was introduced by the British to divide Muslims and Hindus so that they remained a divided house against the Raj. They instigated the Muslims to make a demand for a separate state for the Muslims. The Raj was able to create cleavages between the two communities by exaggerating linguistic, regional, cultural and historical differences. Alienation and hostility were brought out by the British rulers.

To begin with, the British did not treat the Muslims on par with the Hindus, and subsequently the Raj made the Muslims aware of their economic backwardness and the ascendancy of the Hindus in various fields. British education also touched only a small minority of the Muslims. Thus the British rule sowed the seeds of the unequal development of the two communities, hence disintegration. "Communal representation" in legislatures under various legal reforms further strengthened their alienation from the Hindus and increased hostility towards them.

We have, in an earlier chapter, mentioned the formation of the Muslim League in 1906, and the Lucknow Pact in 1916 which accentuated communal disharmony. The formation of Pakistan in 1947 under the leadership of Jinnah after large scale communal bloodshed was not the end of the problem. Even after 1947, the Hindus and Muslims in India have been at loggerheads from time to time even on the slightest provocation from either side. Ahmedabad, Bhiwandi, Ranchi, Aligarh, Meerut, Surat and several other towns have witnessed situations of communal disharmony in the recent years.

One obvious implication of the term "national integration" is that people belonging to a society share ideals and aspirations, emotional bonds and values. In the context of the newly independent nations Gunnar Myrdal writes: "people must have a conception of the nation as a

whole and attach positive valuations to this idea (*nationalism*) before they can feel that national independence and national consolidation are goals worth striving for and that all the other 'modernization ideals' can only be realised in the setting of an independent and consolidated nation-state." Thus, for Myrdal, national integration is the equivalent of nationalism, that is, a feeling of nation against colonialism; and after achieving independence, a feeling against communalism, linguism, regionalism and other disintegrative forces.

Myrdal looks at national integration basically as a political phenomenon, but he relates it to planning for development and realisation of the "modernization ideals" (change for betterment of India). He writes: "Nationalism, therefore, is commonly seen as a force for good by all those in the intellectual elite who are bent on planning policies aimed at development. To them, fostering nationalism will provide the means of breaking down inhibitions and obstacles."

Regionalism versus Nationalism

Is national integration in India a means for achieving desired goals of social change? Is it found with same intensity among the elite and the educated on the one hand, and the masses and the illiterate on the other? Can there be the same level and extent of national cohesiveness and integration among different strata of Indian society? Is religious tolerance the most effective mechanism of emotional unity among the people of India? Does political integration precede national or economic integration?

It is not easy to find satisfactory answers to these questions. An attempt may be made by giving an account of the problems of disintegration and processes of integration since Independence. Immediately after Independence in 1947, India's major problem was of consolidating and strengthening the state against the vestiges of colonialism, feudalism and social and cultural orthodoxy which dominated the social situation. The problem was of making the state stable and effective after it had witnessed disorder

and bloodshed. All this was to be done through democratic means in the new situation. National integration demands unity, and condemns all internal, spatial, religious and caste and creed loyalties and parochial considerations. To achieve economic development, considerations of this sort must not find any place in Indian society.

The Nadars in Tamil Nadu agitated against the privileged Brahmins. This has both communal and economic dimensions, but it has a positive approach, hence no disintegration was involved. The South Indians demonstrate against the North Indians or vice versa. When the Hindi protagonists agitate against the use of English and other languages or when the Tamilians demonstrate against the use of Hindi, we certainly are witnessing the passions of communalism and a threat to the nation.

Several insurgency movements have taken place in India. Boundary disputes between different states have lent strength to regional forces. Several states have demanded autonomy in regard to "subjects" which if taken out of the purview of the central government could perhaps endanger national unity and harmony. Loyalties of caste, religion and language dominate in elections in India, and to that extent undermine both democracy and national integration.

The problem of national integration in India refers to the fact that there are different states, people, castes and communities with somewhat varied backgrounds who are to be made to work together with some common emotional bond and frame of reference. It is a stupendous task because India has a long history of continuity of its specific traditions, religious and cultural attitudes and encapsulated ideas and values. There are differences between different areas, different ethnic and caste groups, different occupational groups and people of different generations.

The question is: can national integration be achieved through rationalism, planning and coordination of national policies for development? Can the emotions of the people be geared towards these values? There is no denial of the

fact that national unity and consolidation have been aimed at throughout the country's progress in social and economic spheres right from 1947. The constitutional provisions for harmony and amity, the establishment of the Planning Commission, the National Development Council or even the National Integration Council and other institutions are evidence of the desire for achieving national unity and harmony.

Political Consolidation and National Integration

Political consolidation was considered a positive step towards economic development and national integration. In this context, the following developments were witnessed upto the end of the 1960s. The government initiated various measures, including the passing of reform and welfare legislations. The practice of untouchability was made an offence. Landlordism was abolished in most of the states by 1960. The weaker sections were granted special provisions for their upliftment under the Constitution of India. The Privy Purses of the princes were taken away in 1969. The minority communities were protected against excesses committed by communal groups in the majority community.

Thus, national integration was understood not simply in terms of avoidance or resolution of conflict, but it was thought of as a process of development and egalitarianism. The early period after Independence was a period of national consolidation and unification. Both political and socio-economic measures were taken to neutralise cleavages of various sorts among different sections. Territorial reorganisation of states on the basis of language, as recommended by the States Reorganisation Commission in 1955, was one such political move, though it did not satisfy many groups and communities.

The adivasis of the Chhotanagpur and the Santhal Parganas in Bihar and of the adjoining areas of Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh demanded the formation of a separate state of Jharkhand. They were denied this, as they did not form a linguistic entity like other states, as

suggested by the Commission. Agitation in Andhra Pradesh for the formation of a Telangana state continued for several years. The Punjab was divided into the present Punjab and Haryana in 1966. The old Bombay State was divided into the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat in 1960. Thus, national integration was attempted in the early years through the constitutional, territorial and developmental framework.

Regionalism and linguism have emerged in a pronounced form as the national problems in post-Independence India. Caste and community based segmentation is a perennial phenomenon in Indian society. However, both these forces have been endangering national integration at times by undermining democratic processes of change and development. Elections have been vitiated by these forces. The old and the new have come into conflict with each other. The old is so strong that the new is unable to replace it. The old forces have absorbed the new ones, and hence prevented their full and fair play in the post-Independence India. Secularism has not been successful as a process of change to overcome the force of tradition as the latter has been a force to reckon with in traditionalising the former.

Political consolidation is only a strategy for striving at national integration. National integration is more than political consolidation. National integration is a state of accommodation among different groups—ethnic, caste, linguistic, etc. It is a state in which the “communal identity” goes along with the “national identity”. Pluralism with cohesiveness is certainly an indication of national integration. Political consolidation was a strategy in the early years after 1947, and now economic development and distributive justice are mechanisms of ensuring harmony among various socio-cultural and economic groupings in India.

The problems of the minorities, the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes, the poor, unemployed youth, women and rural people are all linked with national integration. All these sections of Indian society have agitated from time to time to seek solutions

to their problems, and have, at times, threatened national integration.

Minorities and National Integration

National integration in India is generally seen in terms of the problems and aspirations of the minority groups. What do we mean by the word "minority"? There is no agreed definition of the phenomenon of minority. The Hindus are a "majority" in India, as they constitute 82.72 per cent of the total population. Though, in certain states, the Hindus are numerically less than other communities, they are not treated as a "minority". The Muslims, Sikhs and Christians are the majority communities in the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and Nagaland, respectively. The Scheduled Castes are enumerated as Hindus, but do not share the Hindu identity in the real sense of the term.

Hindu society is highly stratified and fragmented, hence it is difficult to designate precisely a caste or community as a "majority" or "minority" one. The Parsis and the Jains are very small minorities, but they enjoy certain economic and social privileges which even caste Hindus, the S.C. and S.T., and the Muslims do not. Thus, "minority" in the true sense of the term cannot simply be defined in terms of numbers. Further, different communities are differentiated socially, politically and economically. It is these differences which are the causes of conflict and violence in the village community. A Dalit or a Muslim is oppressed not because of his community affiliation alone, but also because he is at the bottom of the social, political and economic hierarchies.

The pluralist perspective on national integration has come from both the west and the Indian polity. There are scarce resources, and people compete for gaining access to these resources. In this process of competition we encounter resistance, acrimony, conflict, etc. Groups are formed on the basis of their religious, linguistic and regional identities, and the people belonging to these primordial groups exploit these ties to get the largest possible share of these

scarce resources of society.

Such a situation also poses the problem of dichotomy between "tradition" and "modernity". Tradition, however, tends to traditionalise the modern forces by absorption and by its own transformation. Modernity is absorbed in the structure of the tradition, but such an assimilation does not really lead to integration of the old and the new. This does not result in a process of distributive justice or egalitarianism. It may ultimately lead to a social formation with more concentration of economic, social and political power in the hands of the traditional elite. Castes have become interest groups, factions and at times mechanisms of social and political mobilisation. However, the benefit of all this goes to the dominant individuals and families of these caste groups.

The Official View

The official or the governmental view of national integration is that religion can bring about harmony and unity. Religion can foster "common values", by "tension-management", and by operating as a "mechanism of social control". Means of mass communication like the press, radio, films and television are being used to promote national integration through the propagation of religious tolerance and harmony. Emphasis on moral education is being given in schools, to inculcate moral and spiritual values among children.

The question is: can religion solve the problems of national integration or does it aggravate it? Is it possible in a country like India where people of different religions, faiths and denominations live together? A particular religion can be a vehicle of fostering brotherhood among its believers. But in a situation of multiple religions, it is not easy to formulate common values for people of all religions. Further, people having faith in the same religion are divided on the basis of caste, kinship and economic gradations. It is difficult to make people follow a uniform pattern of religiosity when they are unevenly placed in their own society. It is difficult to foster common

values among people belonging to different religions.

The processes of change, such as Hinduisation by tribal groups, Sanskritisation by lower caste groups and westernisation by the upper and upper middle castes make it further difficult to acknowledge that religion is an effective integrative mechanism. Conversion to Christianity and Islam, the neo-Buddhist movement, the movement for the formation of Khalistan and other regionalistic movements do not allow the emergence of a common ideology acceptable to all the religions and faiths in India.

In a multi-religious, multi-caste and multi-lingual society like India, the philosophy of "pluralism" and co-existence is basic to national integration; because the majority community's religion or way of life tends to overshadow other religions. In a plural society, hierarchisation based on religion, ethnicity or language would promote disintegration. What we need is an inculcation of the value of tolerance, equity and national patriotism. This is possible when the state does not explicitly or implicitly promote one religion or group at the cost of another.

urdles to National Integration

The problem of national integration has its roots partly in the partition of India in 1947, and partly in the identity crisis being faced by some communities. A number of communities have aspirations to find a place of honour, of equal status vis-a-vis other communities. A feeling of smallness, inferiority, and repression creeps into the minds of members of such communities. Their relatively poor economic condition and backwardness in other spheres also reinforces this feeling of being "second grade" citizens. On the other hand, some communities may have a feeling of being powerful and dominant on several counts, namely, numerical strength, economic standing, education, political power, etc. Because of such notions, communal feelings flare up on the slightest issues—that a Hindu has

hurt the feelings of Muslims or a Muslim has hurt the sentiments of the Hindus. Communal incidents occur due to such illusory notions of community sentiments.

There are some structural factors which have threatened national unity. The very diversity impairs national unity. Linguistic diversity in terms of national and regional languages and dialects divide the country into areas, sub-areas and sub-sub-areas. Hostility to English is expressed by some political and cultural groups because it is an alien language and symbolises the continuity of imperialism and colonialism, and because it has become a means of securing lucrative jobs and high positions for a selected few. Hindi is opposed in the south because it is a language of the north Indian people. The apparent fear is that accepting Hindi as a national language would amount to suppression of the Dravidian and other languages. This act would also mean acceptance of the cultural hegemony of the Hindi speakers and of the north Indians over the whole of the country.

According to the 1961 census, there are 574 Indo-Aryan languages, 153 Dravidians, 65 Austro-Asiatic, and 226 Tibeto-Chinese languages in India. Language became a very sensitive issue in the 1950s because it was made a basis of the reorganisation of states in India. It remains a sensitive issue because it is a medium of instruction, a source of identity and a means expressing one's ideas.

Various regional political groups and parties, like the Akali Dal, Telugu Desam, D.M.K., and Shiv Sena, have demanded regional autonomy. The demand for autonomy has been reflected in attempting to establish the supremacy of regional cultures over the national culture. Formation of new states has even been demanded on the basis of such cultural and ethnic identities.

The issue of minorities is also very important in the context of national integration. We have stated earlier that it is difficult to arrive at an agreed definition of the term "minorities". The Marwaris in Assam, Bengal and Bihar are a minority; but they control trade and business in

se states. They are treated as "outsiders" and "outsiders" in these areas by the local people. "Sons of the Soil" movements have been reported in Assam, Bengal, Orissa and Karnataka. A couple of years ago, Marwaris were killed and looted in Bolangir, a district of Orissa, by the protagonists of the Sons of the Soil movement. One of the serious implications of such a movement is that people cannot move freely from one state or region to other states or regions.

The crux of the problem of minorities is to identify minorities not only in terms of numbers and ethnic background, but also in terms of the actual socio-economic position of the people and their political and cultural aspirations. After identifying groups and individuals belonging to

minorities based on these criteria, the principle of distributive justice needs to be implemented to reduce inequalities and discriminations and to bring about egalitarianism.

Conclusion

The problem of national integration is very complex. The concept of national integration is a composite one. Political integration is only one facet of the problem. Underlying this is a need for economic, social and cultural integration. There is an urgent need to tackle the problems of ethnic groups and minorities. We have suggested a need for redefining the concept of minorities with a view to ensure better understanding and implementation of the principle of distributive justice.

EXERCISES

1. Explain the concept of national integration.
2. What are the minimum pre-requisites for national integration?
3. Is national integration a composite concept?
4. Analyse the nature of communalism in India. How far are economic inequalities the root cause of this malady?
5. In what way is national integration different from nationalism?
6. Bring out the correlation between national integration, development and social change.
7. Why has "regionalism" sprung up in India in recent years?
8. What is political consolidation? How is it different from national integration?
9. Write an essay on the problems of minorities in India.
10. Do you think that the problem of national integration persists because the problems of minorities have not been solved to their satisfaction?